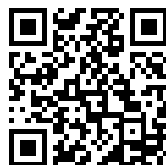

This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

GoogleTM books

<https://books.google.com>



949.72 .H898

C.1

The kidnapping of Prin

Stanford University Libraries



3 6105 048 858 554

THE KIDNAPPING
OF
PRINCE ALEXANDER OF BATTENBERG.



171 7/6 cy
949.72
H 898



LELAND · STANFORD · JUNIOR · UNIVERSITY

THE KIDNAPPING
OF
PRINCE ALEXANDER OF BATTENBERG,
HIS RETURN TO BULGARIA
AND SUBSEQUENT ABDICATION.

BY
A. VON HUH^UN,
Author of "The Bulgarian Struggle for Independence."

TRANSLATED BY
CAPTAIN F. BEAUFORT, ROYAL ARTILLERY.

STANFORD LIBRARY



LONDON:
EDWARD STANFORD, 55, CHARING CROSS, S.W.

1887.

248189

WASSEL COM WAT?

the
de
the
per
soo
wel
"A
an
has
affo
thus
whi
in B
T
stru
peop
this
an e
defen
patri
peopl

PREFACE.

It is less than six months since I published a book under the title of "The Struggle for Bulgarian Independence," which dealt with the events following on the Philippopolis revolution, the Servo-Bulgarian war, and the political incidents of that period. I should never have imagined then that I should so soon again be writing a book about Bulgaria. To-day I might well wish that its contents could be of a pleasanter description.

Now, as then, have I come to Bulgaria in the service of the "*Kölnische Zeitung*," and have in the majority of cases been an eye-witness of the events recorded. Where however that has not been the case, my former personal relations have afforded me access at first hand to the most reliable sources, thus enabling me to render a faithful picture of the events which have been condensed into the short space of a few weeks in Bulgaria.

The overthrow of an amiable and highly-gifted Prince; the struggle for its independence of a young and inexperienced people, but one withal imbued with the feeling of nationality—this forms the contents of this book. The struggle is not yet at an end, and the small Bulgarian nation is still engaged in defending itself with all its might against what a Bulgarian patriot with tears in his eyes once called "l'égorgement d'un peuple."

The circumstance that the development of Bulgarian affairs is still far from having reached a decision, compels me to maintain a considerable reserve as regards certain matters—both of fact and more especially of a personal nature—a reserve, the reasons for which are obvious. I have however been unwilling to wait until the events, which to-day agitate Bulgaria and, one might almost say, Europe, have been so far removed by the march of time, as to offer only a “historical interest.”

Let others in after years write academical books about Bulgaria! My desire has been, while the struggle is yet in progress, to shew in what way and with what means, it is waged, and I have done so because I believe that the public has an interest in knowing it.

A. VON HUHN.

Sofia, 18th October, 1886.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION.

	PAGE.
Difficulty of Prince Alexander's position—Russian animosity dating from the accession of Alexander III.—Various attempts to get rid of the Prince—The East-Rumelian question and the Protocol of Constantinople—The Bulgarian army after the Servian war—The Officers, and the mode adopted by the Prince's enemies with a view to their corruption	1—13

CHAPTER II.

<i>The Burgas Conspiracy</i> —Tour of the Prince in East-Rumelia—The peasant Michailoff betrays the plan of the Russian Captain Nabokoff to seize the Prince at Burgas, and carry him off—Russian Priests and Montenegrins—Damnatory depositions—Suspicious action of the Russian Consulate..	14—20
---	-------

CHAPTER III.

<i>The final preparation for the Treason</i> —Rumours of Servian armaments, spread with a view of ridding Sofia of those troops who were loyal to the Prince—Despatch of Captain Vasoff to Servia—His lying reports—Exchange of notes between Bulgaria, Turkey and Servia—The belief in Bulgaria strengthened that Servia was about to renew the war—Discontent in Bulgaria caused by rumours of a fresh war—The Alexander Regiment despatched to Slivnitza to throw up earthworks—The Struma Regiment marches on Sofia—Sofia in possession of the Conspirators	21—28
---	-------

CHAPTER IV.

<i>The Prince taken prisoner</i> —The palace surrounded—The Struma Regiment and the cadets—The cadets force their way into the palace—The Prince seized—Deplorable bearing of some of the officers—The Prince carried off <i>viâ</i> Vratsha to Rahova—On board the yacht "Alexander"—To Reni as a Russian prisoner—Free at last!	29—41
---	-------

CHAPTER V.

PAGE.

- The Rebellion Triumphant*—Sofia in the hands of the rebels—Bishop Clement celebrates a *Te Deum*, and Bogdanoff, the Counsellor to the Embassy, receives the "adoration of the people" in front of the Russian Consulate—The Provisional Government forges the signatures of Karaveloff and others of the Prince's adherents—Thanks to these forgeries, the provinces accept the Provisional Government, and the army takes the oath of allegiance—The Revolution seems to have finally succeeded 42—51

CHAPTER VI.

- The Leaders of the Conspiracy*—Grueff—Bendereff—Dimitrieff—Bishop Clement—Dragan Zankoff 52—61

CHAPTER VII.

- After the Revolution*—Unfavourable reception of the Revolution in the Country—Rumours of risings in the Provinces—The Clement-Grueff Government recognises the position as untenable—Popoff marches into Sofia with the Alexander Regiment—The Karaveloff-Stambuloff-Nikiforoff Regency—Political—Negotiations with the rebels—They withdraw to Bresnik 62—72

CHAPTER VIII.

- The rising in the Provinces*—Captain Veltscheff raises the Standard in Philippopolis—Lieutenant-Colonel Mutkuroff assumes the command—The Rhodope and Balkan Regiments join—Telegraphic negotiations—Messages to Tirnova—Proclamation by Stambuloff—Stambuloff and Mutkuroff request the Prince to return to Bulgaria—Lieutenant-Colonel Lubomski and Major Usunoff in Widdin declare for the Prince—Other Regiments follow.. 73—86

CHAPTER IX.

- The Prince's Return*—Prince Alexander hears in Lemberg that the Bulgarian Army has risen in his favour—Decides to return to Bulgaria—The return journey through Austria and Rumania becomes a triumphal progress—Enthusiastic reception in Bulgaria—*Viâ Rustchuk, Sistova, Tirnova* to Philippopolis—Outrage on the railway at Tirnova-Semenli—State entry into Sofia 87—102

CHAPTER X.

- The Foreign Verdict*—Prince Alexander and his "influence on the press"—Judgment passed on the action of Russia—The Bulgarians cruelly misunderstood—German public opinion, and the German Government—Close connection between Bulgarian affairs and the interior politics of Germany—Austria-Hungary—Part played by the Tzechs—Tardy recognition of the necessity for preserving the union of the small Danube States—England's weak policy—The Panslavists. 103—115

CHAPTER XI.

PAGE.

<i>The Two Cousins</i> —Two important telegrams—The relations of the Prince with the Emperor of Russia—The Prince's "ingratitude" and his "English policy"—Who is to blame for the estrangement?—Vain efforts of the Prince to effect a reconciliation—The telegram of submission, a political error	116—126
--	---------

CHAPTER XII.

<i>Sofia before the arrival of the Prince</i> —Proclamation by the Prince—Resignation of Karaveloff's Government—Mutkuroff enters Sofia with the Rumelian Regiments—Actual military dictatorship—Karaveloff, Tsanoff, Zankoff, Clement, Nikiforoff, and Panoff arrested—Consternation in Sofia—Zeal of the Rumelians abates—No executions—The rebels at Bresnik	127—134
---	---------

CHAPTER XIII.

<i>Abdication of the Prince</i> —The Prince informs the officers that he is going to resign—Negotiations for the formation of a Regency—The Powers veto the only method by which permanent tranquillity is possible, viz., the execution of the conspirators—Bogdanoff again—Fides Punica—The Stambuloff-Karaveloff-Mutkuroff Regency—Plan of the officers for the retention of the Prince	135—143
--	---------

CHAPTER XIV.

<i>The leave-taking of a deposed Prince</i> —Departure from Sofia—From Sofia to Lompalanka—On board the "Alexander"—Magnificent reception at Widdin—Demonstrations by the Rumanians and Servians—At Turn-Severin—"Auf Wiedersehen!"	144—156
---	---------

CHAPTER XV.

<i>Bulgaria without the Prince</i> —A "Prince's Party"—The Opportunists—Russian diplomacy—The question of the military conspirators and Germany—Russification; the army will have none of it	157—167
--	---------

CHAPTER XVI.

<i>The Sobranye</i> —A congratulatory address from 200 Deputies to Prince Alexander—Removal of the Tzar's portrait from the Sobranye—Gadban Effendi takes the Tzar under his high protection—The proceedings open with cheers for Prince Alexander—A telegram to the Emperor of Russia, and the reply of the Chamber to the Regents' message—Noisy opposition—The State purchases the Prince's private possessions—Aspect of the Sobranye—Constitutional question	168—178
---	---------

CHAPTER XVII.

PAGE.

The investigation—Statements of Bendereff and Grueff—Nikiforoff, Tzanoff and Karaveloff accused—Bendereff and Grueff declare that they had feared a war with Servia—Negotiations through Tzanoff with the Russian Consul 179—192

CHAPTER XVIII.

Kaulbars at Sofia—The former exploits of Kaulbars in Bulgaria—His welcome by a Tzech and a Finnish woman—"The Regents and Ministers are vagabonds and rascals"—The "three points" and the "twelve points" The question of the officers and its possible breadth of application—Rebels and Nihilists—"His Majesty, the Emperor, knows the Bulgarian law better than the Bulgarians"—The Bulgarians refuse obedience, and Kaulbars tries to excite revolts—The Macedonians and Babadjhan—Kaulbars as a demagogue—Kaulbars meets with a fearful reverse, but is quite content—Journey abroad to discover the "true people" 193—219

CHAPTER XIX.

Kaulbars on his travels—To Orkhanie, Vratscha, and Plevna—Points and Counterpoints—The Officers at Sistova misconstrue the good intentions of M. Kaulbars in a lamentable manner—The good peasants of Knäsha—M. Kaulbars becomes incautious—Rustchuk and Shumla—Disillusions—The Regiments do *not* march on Tirnova—Major Petroff causes M. Kaulbars grief—The wicked people of Varna 220—231

CHAPTER XX.

The Elections—The security of Sofia—Major Popoff—Arrival of the peasants—Speech by Neklyudoff—"The elections are null and void"—The assault of the Sheepskins on the polling booths is repulsed—"To the Russian Consulate"—M. Neklyudoff's ménagerie—Neklyudoff finds himself at variance with his colleagues regarding his humanitarian task—Sofia *s'amuse*—A first collision—The windows of the English Consulate are broken—A second collision—Russian kavasses open fire on the crowd—The German and English Consulates are at the same time bombarded—M. Neklyudoff becomes alarmed at the state of affairs and dismisses the peasants—The latter are arrested—Neklyudoff's diplomatic campaign—The result of the elections in Sofia and the provinces—The Dubnitza murders 232—249

CHAPTER XXI.

The situation after the Elections—The independence of Bulgaria—The Great Powers—Tisza and Churchill—The Balkan Federation—A dark future—No fresh German Prince for the throne of Bulgaria! 250—264

CORRIGENDA.

- p. 259—last line but one, *read* assassins.
- p. 262—last line, *for* short-fisted *read* stout-fisted.
- p. 263—last line but five, remove the apostrophe at close of each of the four proper names.

INTRODUCTION.

Difficulty of Prince Alexander's position—Russian animosity dating from the accession of Alexander III.—Various attempts to get rid of the Prince—The East-Rumelian question and the Protocol of Constantinople—The Bulgarian army after the Servian war—The Officers, and the mode adopted by the Prince's enemies with a view to their corruption.

With a rapidity almost unexampled in history, in the course of a few weeks in Bulgaria events have succeeded each other, which, under ordinary circumstances, would have filled a twelvemonth and more: events political, diplomatic, and, one might say, "conspiratorial."

In this interval, Prince Alexander has been arrested, carried off, recalled, received in triumph, and a second time compelled to surrender his crown and leave the country. The events that thus without warning rudely broke in on Europe, so much in need of rest and peace, did not come altogether as a surprise to those who had, from month to month, carefully followed the development of the situation in Bulgaria, and who were not only cognisant of what was taking place on the surface, but of the more secret game that was being played behind the scenes. It is not of course intended by this to convey the meaning, that the exact manner which the conspirators of the 21st August would choose for putting into execution their plan for the removal of the Prince, was known beforehand, but this much was known, that Russia would do everything in her power to get rid of the hated Prince. On all sides it was evident that the moment was fast approaching for some decisive move on

the part of Russia and her friends; unless she was prepared to forego all hope of gaining her desired ends. Were the Prince once to succeed in his difficult task of placing the legislative union of the two Bulgarias on a satisfactory basis, his position would be thereby so strengthened, that any attempt that might be made against him afterwards would have but a sorry chance of success. The East-Rumelian question, in the form in which it had emerged from the Constantinople Conference, presented the one ever vulnerable point at which the Prince might be attacked. The Bulgarians, and with them of course the Prince, desired the union *de jure* of the two countries, which had been brought about *de facto* on the 1st January. European diplomacy, led by Russia, aimed at the reversal of this union. With this object, the Russian agents in Bulgaria and East-Rumelia gave out that the sole obstacle to the union lay in the person of Prince Alexander; *with* him annihilation of Bulgarian unity, *without* him union as complete as might be desired. We know now that the Bulgarians had both objects, Prince and Union, equally at heart! They had no desire to part with either; they refused to consider the alternatives put forward by Russia; they sought only to devise a means whereby they might retain both the Prince and the Union. Russia however, by dint of continually discussing the advisability of getting rid of the Prince, succeeded in so far familiarising the Bulgarians with the question, as to deaden to some extent the sentiment of loyalty, and thus insensibly to weaken it. The ground was in this way not unskilfully prepared beforehand for a movement against the Prince; and it cannot be a matter of surprise that Russia, building her hopes on

these foundations, should not anticipate much difficulty in gaining the consent of the people to the deportation of the Prince. The only question for her was to plan the deportation, and to find the necessary agents for carrying it into effect. The deed once *un fait accompli*, that it would be so accepted by the people, she never had a moment's doubt.

For years she had, with untiring pertinacity, directed all her efforts to the attainment of this object, the reverses she met with being as powerless to turn the direction of her policy as the numerous attempts of Prince Alexander were to soften the hatred of the Russian Tzar. From the very commencement of the Prince's reign differences of opinion had of necessity cropped up between the Russian and Bulgarian Governments, which, on account of the various difficulties which beset the latter, were unavoidable, but which, thanks to the benevolent attitude of the Emperor Alexander II, had always been found capable of satisfactory settlement. With the accession, however, of Alexander III, the relations between the two Governments underwent a complete change. From that date the malevolence of the Russian agents was allowed full play, while the powerful support they received from St. Petersburg induced them to make repeated attempts to dethrone the Prince. These attempts, indeed, date from the *coup d'état*, when Dragan Zankoff returned from exile in Vratsha, and, with the suppression of the Dictatorship, took the lead in the Government. His recall is to be ascribed to Russian influence, and little doubt exists that communications at that period passed between him and the Russians, having for their object the deportation of the Prince. But the

moment Zankoff found himself in power his attitude changed, and he commenced to "run" an *anti-Russian*, National Bulgarian policy, the Russians being then thrown on their own resources for the propagation of revolution. It was at this time that the first positive attempt against the Prince was made, namely, that of the Russian Generals, Soboleff and Kaulbars, who attempted at the dead of night to carry off the Prince from his Palace. They were, however, foiled in their design, the sentry on duty denying the Generals access to the Prince. Soboleff and Kaulbars found themselves obliged to quit Bulgaria, and for a time it appeared as if Russia had renounced all further attempts to gain her ends. But with the advent to power of Karaveloff's Ministry, the system of underground intrigue commenced anew, Russians and Zankoffists uniting their efforts to seduce the members of the Government from their allegiance to the Prince. They announced that they were acting with the full consent and in the name of the Russian Tzar, and they proposed to two eminent members of Karaveloff's party to proceed to St. Petersburg, and there to ask an audience of the Emperor. This would, they were informed, be granted to them, and they would then be able to learn from the mouth of the Emperor himself, that he would regard with favour any and all steps that might be taken against the "Battenberg Prince," the title by which the Prince was always spoken of by the Russian party. On the rejection, by the personages in question, of these overtures, the Russians commenced systematically to spread disaffection in the army. The sole result, however, of these endeavours was the disruption of the feelings of

cameraderie existing between the Russian and Bulgarian officers, a result hardly conducive to discipline.

Such was the not very hopeful state of affairs when, on the 17th September, 1885, took place the revolution at Philippopolis, the success of which completely altered the position in which Prince Alexander stood to the Bulgarians on the one side, and to the Russians on the other. Russia saw Bulgaria slipping away more and more from under her influence; and the efforts of her agents to bring about the removal of the Prince were now pressed on with redoubled energy. During the Prince's stay in Philippopolis, the Russian agent Kojander moved heaven and earth against him. The recall of Russian officers from Bulgaria, and later the erasure of the Prince's name from the army list, were prompted by no international considerations, but solely with the view of shaking the Prince's position. Concurrently with these overt acts secret intrigues against the Prince were carried on. On the 22nd September Kojander having sent for Stambuloff, the President of the Chamber of Deputies, proposed to him, that, with a view to co-operating for the dethronement of the Prince, he should induce the Chamber to refuse the supplies necessary for both the completion of the union and the carrying on of war. He represented to Stambuloff, that if he, by agreeing to the proposition, would assist in getting rid of the Prince, Russia on her side would bring about the union by peaceful means, but if not, that she would take such measures as would render it abortive. On Stambuloff's firm rejection of these proposals, Russia turned to Karaveloff, but here again met with a rebuff in most decided and uncompromising terms. Each justified his

rejection of the Russian proposals on the grounds, that such a course of action as that traced out would not only be the basest ingratitude towards the Prince, but would also cover Bulgaria with everlasting shame. Once again, during the Servian war, Bulgaria found herself on the brink of a revolution, viz. at the moment when bad news from the seat of war seemed to foreshadow the complete overthrow of the Bulgarian army. Already, by the 19th September* was there ready, cut and dry, the Provisional Government, under Dragan Zankoff, which was only awaiting a decisive victory on the part of the Servians to be installed, to declare the Prince dethroned, and then to call on the aid of Russia, which certainly would not have been denied.

The rapid march of events however combined with the totally unlooked for brilliant military successes of the Prince, and the consequent quickening of the national feeling among the Bulgarians, rendered the further prosecution of the Russian designs for the time being impracticable. Time and the infamous Protocol of Constantinople were necessary to furnish Russia with a new instrument.

So far all attempts to undermine the Prince had been made either through the military, *or* the political elements of society; now, however, it was decided if possible to continue the two, and to prepare the way for a "mixed revolution." In the Zankoffists, who under the administration of Karaveloff had been forced entirely into the back-ground, there were ready and willing tools to hand, but the question was to find the right men amongst the military, men either sufficiently devoid of

* November?—*Trans.*

the feelings of honour and conscientious scruples, or foolish enough to co-operate in the work of treason and annihilation of their fatherland.

What were the means employed in each separate case, or what the arts of corruption brought to bear on individuals, we may for the present pass over. But with a view to understanding how it could be possible in the main to count on the participation of the army in designs of a treasonable character, a short sketch of the military position, as developed in Bulgaria since the war, will not be out of place.

The Bulgarian line regiments had entered on the Servian war with a thorough training, and had proved themselves capable of the highest performance. It is recognised on all sides that this was in no small degree due to the Russian officers, who had imparted an excellent education to a splendid material. That the young and inexperienced Bulgarian officers should, under the leadership of their Prince, understand how to handle with skill and talent the military machine entrusted to their hand, excited the wonder of the whole military world. But already the cry was heard that the further work of education would in time of peace have to be entrusted to other and more experienced men. During the actual progress of the war this fact had been thoroughly recognised by the Bulgarian officers, but after the war they could not bring themselves to abdicate the high commands to which they had so quickly attained. The endeavour on the part of the Prince to *attract foreign officers* met with great opposition, and practically fell through. It is, of course, quite conceivable that young officers, who had within barely

twelve months been advanced from the rank of captain to that of regimental and brigade commanders, chiefs of the general staff, and war ministers, would not easily be content with a slower, albeit according to European ideas, a still incredibly rapid promotion. The senior lieutenants might have become battalion-commanders, while several regimental commands could still have been found for the senior captains, had it not been considered necessary to entrust the higher posts to foreigners. In the conflict that then ensued between better judgment and self-love, the latter won the day, the victory being rendered easier, and indeed possible, by the Constitution, which limited the prerogatives of the Prince in military matters, and primarily placed the control of the army, not so much in the hands of the Prince, as in those of the War Minister, or, to speak more accurately, of the Ministry. The Ministry, however, would have nothing to say to a measure which had the appearance of placing a slight on the Bulgarian officers; they were afraid of promoting a feeling of discontent in the army; their idea of Bulgaria for the Bulgarians was conceived in the narrow-minded sense of "the church tower politician" (*kirchturm-politiker*,) and was entirely opposed to the demands both of common sense and military exigencies. Accordingly, to the Bulgarian officers was entrusted the peace training of their men. Contrary to every expectation their efforts were crowned with complete success. The new regiments seemed all that could be desired. It was even maintained by some competent critics that they produced now a better impression than under the Russian *régime*. The difficult task of blending the Bulgarian and Rumelian troops was fairly successful,

thanks to the untiring zeal of the officers, and it seemed as if those were in the right who held that the army might without danger be left entirely in the hands of its young officers.

As regards the mere training of the men, in the narrowest sense of the word, they probably were in the right; but against this was to be set off certain grave disadvantages, which acted most prejudicially to the real value of the army. In the *lower* ranks the strictest discipline was maintained, but this was not so in any corresponding degree in the *upper* ranks. Of those officers who, but a couple of years before, had been only lieutenants, several were now "full blown" generals, while others still led their companies. It is quite comprehensible, indeed I might say natural, that such a condition of things should lead to jealousies, that petty ambitions and intrigues should creep into the army, and that the moral authority of the superior officers should sustain severe damage. It may almost be said, extraordinary though it may sound, that the very fact of strict discipline being maintained in the subordinate ranks was, at least in its ultimate consequences, a misfortune. Thus and thus only was it possible for the Struma Regiment to mutiny and to be led against their Prince, for it is now an acknowledged fact that the men were only with the greatest difficulty induced to perform the service required of them. An army whose development has been for the most part brought about in the lap of revolution, can never be thoroughly reliable; and this general proposition acquires double force when applied to such a young army as the Bulgarian.

In the middle of August the condition of the Bul-

garian army was to all outward appearance perfectly satisfactory. Inwardly however that most important factor in an army, the corps of officers, was suffering from a want of discipline, the evil results of which shewed themselves in discontent, bickerings, and jealousies, with all their concomitant evils. In the higher ranks of the Bulgarian army moral authority was lacking, and thus the door was opened to all sorts of evil influences. The Russians were perfectly acquainted with these conditions, and knew well how to utilise them, continually stimulating the worst passions amongst the officers, and following, if such an expression be permissible when speaking of Imperial Russia, a destructive Nihilist policy. To destroy all respect for monarchical principles, to undermine all love for the Prince, to egg on to the commission of crime inordinate, or insufficiently gratified, ambition—such was the task to which month after month M. Bogdanoff, Colonel Sakharoff, and Colonel Tshitshagoff zealously and successfully applied their energies. The choice of Sakharoff to succeed General Kantakuzen as Military Attaché must be looked on as a specially happy one. No one had such a perfect acquaintance with the body of Bulgarian officers as Sakharoff. He had for several years been Director of the "Junkerschule," the majority of Bulgarian officers having thus passed through his hands. If Sakharoff's personal acquaintance only extended to the officers of the Bulgarian army, this defect was remedied by Tshitshagoff as far as East-Rumelia was concerned, he having, during his long service as Military Attaché at Philippopolis, become thoroughly acquainted with the officers of the latter province. Thus the *terrain*, over which the Russian

agents had to work, was not only favourable, but had been thoroughly studied in all its particulars. Probably the Russian Agency in Sofia had better personal relations with the Bulgarian officers than the Bulgarian War Office had; but where these relations were not exactly conformable with Russian wishes, there all means were enlisted to ensure the corruption of the officers to such a point as should come up to the ideal of M. Sakharoff.

The fact that only a small portion of the Bulgarian officers succumbed to the temptations held out to them, must, if one goes to the root of the matter, be practically viewed as a moral victory on the part of that body, a corps that could hardly yet be allowed with justice to take rank in all respects with the corresponding institutions in European countries. That such an act as that, for instance, of the 21st August would be impossible, and indeed inconceivable, were German officers concerned, is perfectly true, but no special credit can be taken on that score, for the German officer receives from his earliest childhood an education, which creates in him a sentiment of honour and loyalty towards his sovereign, while, on his entry into the officer-corps, the traditions there ruling combine to render this sentiment an inseparable adjunct, and component part of all his ideas and notions. All this is wanting in Bulgaria. The present officers have for the most part been educated in hatred to the then lord of the land, viz. the Sultan. Many of them fought sword in hand against him during the Russo-Turkish war, and as such had already once found themselves in the position of rebels. When then later on they entered the ranks of the Bulgarian army, they were entirely without either national or dynastic traditions, while moreover

their tutors were not Bulgarians but Russians, who, apart from purely technical training, considered their principal task to instil into the Bulgarian youth as their chief article of faith, the gospel of the "Liberator-Tzar" of Almighty Russia. The Prince merely passed for the "Statthalter" of the Emperor, and just as the Russian officers let slip no opportunity, both in season and out of season, of bringing this home to him, so also they did not fail to educate the young Bulgarian officers in the same ideas. Especial care was taken systematically to incite such Bulgarian officers, as were sent to the Russian "Kriegsakademie",* against the Prince. It was only on the departure of the Russian officers that the Prince was able to bring his influence really to bear on his Bulgarian officers. The success of his efforts, both before and during the Servian war, was shown by the degree to which he won over to himself their faithful adherence, thus rendering the subsequent, almost incredible, exertions abortive, and powerless to detach from him and to goad on to high treason, more than a small portion of his officers.

Nothing is further from my purpose than attempting to whitewash persons, whom no amount of whitewashing could ever render really white; but my object is to shew generally how what happened, was possible.

It is notorious that the treason of the 21st August was the result of long and careful preparation, notwithstanding the apparent unwillingness of its authors to carry it out. This latter phenomenon was perhaps due to a shyness on their part, of appearing openly before the eyes

* Answering to our Staff College, the Russian title being Akademiya Generalnava Shtaba.—*Trans.*

of all Europe as the instigators of a military revolt. Perhaps also they were too well acquainted with the feelings, which animated the large majority of the officers, not to fear a possible counter-stroke directed against a conspiracy, contrived and carried through by a small minority. Accordingly, once again they essayed to carry out their designs without the aid of the military, which latter were held in reserve as the last "sheet-anchor" (*Notanker*), as the *ultima ratio*. How this fell out we shall see in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II.

THE BURGAS CONSPIRACY.

Tour of the Prince in East-Rumelia—The peasant Michailoff betrays the plan of the Russian Captain Nabokoff to seize the Prince at Burgas, and carry him off—Russian Priests and Montenegrians—Damnatory depositions—Suspicious action of the Russian Consulate.

Prince Alexander had, during the month of May, undertaken a tour through East-Rumelia, in the course of which he was everywhere enthusiastically received by the populace. The political situation was at the moment comparatively quiet, and it was believed that the East had for a time placed a period to its surprises, when suddenly in the midst of this calm the telegraph brought the news that a conspiracy had been discovered at Burgas, the object of which was nothing less than the seizure of the Prince and his abduction on board a vessel, which had been kept in readiness, or should this not be possible, his murder. A Russian, Captain Nabokoff, was named as the ringleader and soul of the plot. This man was nephew to the former Russian Minister of Justice, and had for some time sojourned at Burgas, ostensibly with a view to enjoying the distractions of the chase. The published details of this conspiracy seem to point to the fact that its author had at his disposal very considerable financial means, as otherwise it would have been impossible for him to bring the instruments of his design all the way from Montenegro. If the plot was, indeed, a "real" one, it also had been for some considerable time in preparation, and there can be

not the smallest doubt, that it was devised and elaborated neither by individual discontented Bulgarians nor by an adventurous Russian officer, but by that Power whose principal efforts had long been directed to getting rid of Prince Alexander. But for the very reason that this undertaking could have originated solely from Russia, and that too from official Russia, considerable doubt was felt in Europe as to its genuineness, [N.B.—The crime of the 21st August had not yet been committed!] and as the subsequent investigation seemed to be allowed quietly to drop, it came to be considered rather in the light of an exaggeration, or the creation of the heated brain of some over zealous prefect.

Whether people at the time were justified in denying the genuine character of this plot for the simple reason that, had it been taken as in earnest, Russia's participation in it must also have been accepted,—this question, viewed by the light of more recent events, can hardly be answered in the affirmative. But since a retrospective argument, based on the relative positions of the present and past, must always be viewed with suspicion, and is constantly open to attack, I give here the following simple account of the facts as they occurred, so as to enable the reader to form his own opinions.

The first news of the conspiracy reached the Government in the following despatch, dated 17th May, from the civil authorities in Burgas:—

“I was to-day requested by the Sub-Prefect, who is performing the duties of Prefect, to come to him, and I there found one George Michailoff, who made the following deposition in my presence:—I was requested in writing by Goranoff, the leader of the Opposition, to

repair to his house. Yesterday evening, complying with this request, I found there a meeting composed of the following persons:—the Russian Captain Nabokoff, the Montenegrin priest Kolaroff, Shishmanof Buloff, two Montenegrins, and others. The object of the meeting was as follows:—His Highness, who was then travelling from Slivna to Burgas, was to be intercepted at a certain place, called Kamtschikdere, between Burgas and Aitos, and an endeavour made either to obtain possession of his person, or, should that be impossible, to murder him. For the execution of this plan, thirty well-armed men, under the command of Captain Nabokoff, were to be in readiness. The proposal to me was to collect some twenty trusty men of my associates, and to repair with them to the spot indicated, and there to place myself under the orders of Captain Nabokoff. Should this project fail, the intention was to seize His Highness before his entry into the town of Burgas, and to convey him on board a bark, which would be in waiting on the open sea. Karaveloff and Zankoff, the Prefect accompanying the Prince, were to be murdered, while the Sub-Prefect was to have been already arrested on some pretence. The final result was to be the outbreak of a revolution and the occupation of the country by the Russians. To-day it had been intended to send two Greeks to Ankhiolo and Karnabad, one of whom, immediately on the outbreak of the revolution, was to cut the telegraph wires, while the other was to inform the band of the arrival of the Prince, and whether he was travelling on horseback or by carriage, and also what escort he had with him. Should the project succeed he was to cut the telegraph wires between Slivna and

Burgas. The following oath was then taken before the Montenegrin priest by all the persons assembled in Goranoff's house:—‘We swear in God's name to keep everything secret, and betray nothing of our plan. So help us God.’”

In consequence of this intelligence, and in conformity with telegraphic instructions from the Minister, the arrest of the persons indicated by the peasant Michailoff was carried out on the 18th May. Nabokoff and the Montenegrin priest were arrested in the dwelling of the former. The moment they were arrested the secretary to the *Russian Consul* appeared, and demanded their immediate liberation. This demand was however refused. While these arrests were being made, several Montenegrins disappeared, who, although apparently without means, had been living comfortably for some time past in Burgas.

On the 19th May a man was arrested, who had arrived in a boat belonging to the Russian Steam Navigation Company, and whom that Company's agent had tried to smuggle on shore without the usual passport formalities. He gave his name as Kontitsh, and was the bearer of a Montenegrin passport issued two days previously in Constantinople. The presumption is that this Kontitsh belonged to the twenty or thirty men, who had been expected, and who were to have been placed under the orders of Nabokoff for the execution of the project. Very likely the reason that Kontitsh was landed alone was that he might find out what had happened, as, in consequence of Nabokoff's arrest, the men had not been fetched off by lighters as had been promised. (Compare later the deposition of the sailor Nikoloff.) On the same day the Montenegrin priest, Dragovitch, was

arrested just as he was about to leave Nabokoff's, where he had secreted himself. Both the men arrested, when the following day they were brought up for examination, refused to give any information unless the Russian Consul was admitted to the hearing. Several days passed without the investigation eliciting any evidence of importance beyond the deposition of Michailoff and the suspicious circumstances. But on the 1st June the civil authorities were able to render the following report:—

“To-day the boatmen Christo Nikoloff and Stat Nikoloff, who have been placed under examination as witnesses, have, after much questioning, admitted that, on the evening of the 17th May, Captain Nabokoff sent for them to his house, by one Todoroff. They there found the Montenegrin priest, Kolaroff, Shishmanoff and Goranoff, and the Captain required them to go out on the night of the 17th-18th May with two lighters, to meet the Russian steamer that was coming from Constantinople, and to hail her. Some twenty or thirty persons would then come on board their lighters, and they were to land them as quietly as possible. As the Captain was arrested the next day, the plan was not carried out. To-day the telegraphist, Michail Bogdanoff, further confirmed on oath the truth of the following deposition made in Varna by Ilia Zitshoff:—On the 12th May, one Thomas, a servant in the employ of the Agent of the Russian Steam Navigation Company, narrated the following to him: Captain Nabokoff and the agent had met one another, and Nabokoff had read aloud to him a letter in the Russian language, of which he (Thomas) had understood the following fragment—‘Be on your guard Nabokoff, you may come to grief in the affair, but the orders which you

have received must be most punctually carried out.' Other witnesses state that Nabokoff publicly insulted His Highness on the 11th May, and that he added, that 'they would soon see what would happen.'"

In the face of these damning depositions, affairs began to wear, from the point of view of the Russian Agency in Sofia, rather a critical aspect, and a demand was at once preferred for full satisfaction for the arrest of Nabokoff; at the same time the right was claimed of protecting the interests of the Montenegrins. In a later note, the Agency declared the Bulgarian courts incompetent to deal with Nabokoff's case, advancing in support of this declaration that it had no confidence in their impartiality. As might be supposed, the Bulgarians refused to accept this view, and the enquiry proceeded. By the end of June, the civil authorities had drawn up a formal indictment, when the Russian Agency again attempted to move in Nabokoff's favour, and demanded that at least he should not be brought before a jury. This demand was by order of the Minister of Justice complied with, and the proceedings were now at length in a position to commence. Various fresh representations of the Russian Agency however once more delayed the affair, and thus it was, that before the commencement of the proceedings, the Revolution of the 21st August broke out, which for the nonce threw the incident of Burgas into the back-ground.

As was said just now, the reader can form his own opinion from the documents that have been cited, as to whether the accusation against Nabokoff is in truth as ridiculous as the Russian party maintain. It will be very difficult indeed to convince any serious man that it was

without any object that Nabokoff lived for weeks together in Burgas, with his staff of Montenegrin priests and quondam scoundrels, and maintained the lot out of his own private funds. The extremely suspicious negotiations with the sailors, the remarkable conduct of the Agency of the Russian Steam Navigation Company, all so exactly fit in with the peasant Michailoff's story, that one might with a clear conscience accept it as a fact that Prince Alexander was at Burgas only saved by the skin of his teeth from the hands of his murderers.

CHAPTER III.

THE FINAL PREPARATION FOR THE TREASON.

Rumours of Servian armaments, spread with a view to ridding Sofia of those troops who were loyal to the Prince—Despatch of Captain Vasoff to Servia—His lying reports—Exchange of notes between Bulgaria, Turkey and Servia—The belief in Bulgaria strengthened that Servia was about to renew the war—Discontent in Bulgaria caused by rumours of a fresh war—The Alexander Regiment despatched to Slivnitza to throw up earthworks—The Struma Regiment marches on Sofia—Sofia in possession of the Conspirators.

On the failure, as described above, at Burgas of their plans for the overthrow of Prince Alexander, his enemies had recourse to the last desperate method, which had till then been held in reserve—a military revolution. As before stated, the main features of the scheme had been arranged long before, but the details of execution required careful elaboration on the spot. That this was done with consummate ability will be allowed on all hands; indeed both amateurs and specialists in the art of plots will readily acknowledge the Bulgarian conspirators and the persons who stood behind them to be masters in their profession. From the technical standpoint of the conspirator they are entitled to unqualified praise; and if their work was not in the end crowned with success, those are to blame who had completely misjudged both the general political situation and the real sentiments of the country, and, relying on false premises, had decreed the revolution, and *not* those who were intrusted with its execution. It is well worthy of note, the foresight displayed by the conspirators, even to

allowing various officers, who were known to be deeply attached to the Prince, such as Colonel Nikolaieff and Majors Panoff, Petroff, and Panitza, to travel abroad on leave of absence for lengthy periods, so that eight days was the earliest at which they could be again in Sofia.

The following were the camps, so to speak, in which an understanding was successfully brought about, and conspirators recruited :—

(1.) The War Office, in which the aid both of Captain Bendereff, of the General Staff, who happened, in the absence of that official, to be acting Minister of War, and of the Departmental Chief, Captain Dimitrieff, was secured.

(2.) The 2nd Infantry Regiment (Struma Regiment) in garrison at Köstendil, the commander of which, Major Stoyanoff, had joined the conspiracy, and had induced his officers to follow his example.

(3.) The Regiment of Artillery in garrison at Sofia.

(4.) The “Junkerschule” (Cadets’ College), which was under the orders of Major Grueff.

(5.) Individual officers.

(6.) Certain political circles.

The principal part lay in the first place with the officers belonging to the War Office, who were to use their influence with a view to securing the removal from Sofia of such troops as adhered to the Prince, and thus to preclude the possibility of a determined armed resistance. The first aim was to get rid of the Alexander Regiment, which remained faithful to the Prince, and its Commander, Major Popoff, whose devotion to the Prince was too well known to render it worth while attempting to draw him into the plot. A plan was hit upon, which,

with all its baseness, was not devoid of a certain ingenuity. A rumour which from day to day was given a clearer outline, was spread that Servia, mindful of her defeat the previous year, was arming for war. From the Struma Regiment, which was quartered on the Servian frontier, reports, more and more serious, of Servian defensive works and massing of troops were sent in, the result of which was to render the Prince and the Government most uneasy. Seeing that a year ago the Servians had on the most absurd grounds, or rather on no grounds at all, declared war; seeing that in the later negotiations for peace, after having been met all through with never-ending signs of ill-will, the Bulgarians had had to sign a treaty, which resembled rather an armistice than a treaty of peace; that other experiences of no pleasant odour had been their lot; it was not to be wondered at, that the Servians were credited with every possible evil intention. The Prince, who could not suppose that he was being systematically deceived by the War Office, could not do otherwise than give credence to the reports that were made to him; and had to ask himself the question whether, under such circumstances, he was not required to take counter-measures, so as not a second time to be attacked unprepared. Before, however, ordering either a total or partial mobilization, the Prince determined to satisfy himself as far as possible as to the truth of the rumours of Servia's war preparations, and with this object to send into the country a smart officer to see with his own eyes, and hear with his own ears. For this important and delicate mission the War Office, where, on account of the continued indisposition of the War Minister, Nikofoff, the influence of Bendereff

and Dimitrieff was all-powerful, recommended to him, Vasoff, a captain of engineers, who was accordingly sent to Servia. It was not long before a report was received from him, giving details of a most disturbing character, according to which there could be no longer room for doubt as to the warlike intentions of Servia. According to the report, works were being thrown up on all sides, the men of the Reserves were being called up, enormous ammunition and Commisariat stores were being massed on the frontier,—in short “War was in sight.” That Vasoff never went to Servia, that he remained during his inspection travels in Russia, that his reports were drawn up in accordance with instructions received from Bendereff—who could have guessed this?

According to these reports, the mobilization of the Bulgarian Army appeared in the light of a solemn duty to the country. Before however coming to a decision on the matter, the Prince sent a note to Turkey, in which he informed her of the Servian movements, called on her mediation or aid as the case might be, and notified that in view of the threatened attack of Servia, he should be obliged to take counter-measures. Turkey, aghast at the prospect of fresh disturbances, and justly considering that, in the event of war, she herself would probably have to pay the costs, despatched a telegraphic note to Belgrade, in which she in tolerably energetic though extremely courteous language, demanded an explanation of the military measures, intelligence of which she had received from the Bulgarian Government. This produced on the part of Frassanovitch, the Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs, a note, which deserves to be for ever preserved in a Museum of Incivilities, were such

an institution ever to be raised. As was pretended later, this note, which was couched in the most violent and insulting terms, was nothing more than the irate expression of injured innocence; but at the time it must, having regard to its unmeasured violence, have produced quite another impression. Anyone reading the note at the time, would have said that the Servians were beside themselves with rage at the premature discovery of their intentions—*tu te fâches, donc tu as tort*. That such an outburst of rage could be the result of conscious rectitude, no one, Prince Alexander included, would at that time have believed; and this was exactly what the conspirators were aiming at. The Slivnitza works must again be placed in order, and fresh ones thrown up along the Servian frontier, and for this the only means at the Prince's disposal at the moment, were the soldiers of the Alexander Regiment. The Prince could not but acknowledge the justice of the argument. Two battalions were despatched in all haste to Slivnitza, only a single one remaining behind in garrison at Sofia.

At the moment when the first movements of troops took place, there could be nothing very surprising if others followed. Two battalions were hardly sufficient for the construction of works on any large scale. What was more natural than that other detachments should be set in motion, and particularly in the first line that which lay nearest, the Struma Regiment?

While the conspirators had thus been successful in turning the military situation to serve their ends, they evinced on the other hand no less skill in taking every advantage which the political situation offered them. While it was these very men who had caused the news

of the Servian armaments to reach the Prince, they at the same time had it rumoured among the army and the people, that there was nothing really in these same armaments, but that last year's war had proved so acceptable to the Prince, that he now desired for his own private satisfaction to renew it. Incredible as it appears, it is nevertheless a fact, that the version thus sedulously spread far and wide, obtained credence not only with the civil population, but also in the army itself. Those who knew anything of the Prince, could not but have recognised at the first glance such a supposition to be an absurdity; but it would appear that at that time many Bulgarians had formed no real comprehension of the Prince's character. Anyway these calumnies were readily believed, and gave birth to a certain amount of ill-will towards the Prince, who was represented as willing, without rhyme or reason, merely to gratify a personal desire, to plunge his country into the horrors of a fresh war. In the Servian war it had been a question of defending their country, and the Bulgarians had fought magnificently; but it would be a great mistake to draw the conclusion that a love of fighting was one of their characteristics. The Bulgarian desires nothing better than to be left in peace, and views that person with anything but favour, who, except at the dictates of absolute necessity, disturbs that peace. This national characteristic obtains even in the army; and a wanton war would never commend itself to, or be popular with, that body. Thus the rumours that were circulated of the supposed desire for war on the part of the Prince, resulted in giving rise, both amongst the populace and in the army itself, to a certain amount of ill-will towards him.

✓ Such were the circumstances under which the Struma Regiment marched by night on Sofia. Not a single one of the soldiers knew what was in the wind, nor were the officers all in the secret. The only battalion of the Alexander Regiment still remaining in Sofia had been, as is usual during the summer, placed in standing camp at some four kilometers from the town, and it was against this battalion that the rebels moved in the first instance. The soldiers were told that it was some sort of field operation by night that they were about to be practised in; and that it was solely as part of the programme that the Alexander Regiment was to be disarmed. This "field operation" (*Felddienstübung*) succeeded perfectly; the battalion was attacked while asleep and disarmed, and the Struma Regiment was then in a position to continue its march on Sofia without fear of being attacked from behind.

Thanks to the understanding that had been arrived at with the officers in the War Office, they had been able to arrange a complete plan of operations, and to indicate each house which, on the entry of the regiment, was to be surrounded with sentries. In all administrative details the Bulgarian is a master of his art, and as such he proved himself on this occasion. Led by trustworthy guides, patrols were posted throughout the town, and every house, that was occupied by any one known to be friendly to the Prince, was guarded. The only instructions issued to the men were to allow no civilian in the streets, and to cause any officer unable to give the countersign to re-enter his house. On the slightest sign of resistance they were without hesitation to use their arms. With a view to diminishing any surprise that these orders might cause,

various explanations seem to have been given to the men. Some at any rate declare that they still, even in Sofia, believed themselves to be engaged on some nocturnal field exercise, while others on the other hand aver that their officers had told them that Prince Alexander had been made a prisoner by his enemies, and that they had come to Sofia in order to set him at liberty. It is certain that the men were left in the dark as to the real object of the nocturnal expedition, and that many of those soldiers who were shouting "*dolu*" (down with them,) imagined that this "*dolu*" had reference to the Prince's enemies. It was on this account that the men of the Struma Regiment were carefully kept from coming into immediate contact with the Prince, only officers and cadets, whom Grueff had sufficiently demoralised for the purpose, being told off for this.

As soon as all the precautions, that had been judged necessary, had been taken—those persons who were considered dangerous imprisoned in their houses, the avenues to the palace occupied, and the conspirators in Sofia informed of what had taken place—the storm burst on the palace.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PRINCE TAKEN PRISONER

The palace surrounded—The Struma Regiment and the cadets—The cadets force their way into the palace—The Prince seized—Deplorable bearing of some of the officers—The Prince carried off *viâ* Vratsha to Rahova—On board the yacht "Alexander"—To Reni as a Russian prisoner—Free at last!

With the exception of the conspirators, no one in Sofia had any idea of what was in preparation. Quickly and noiselessly the Struma Regiment had been marched into Sofia, under the orders of Major Stoyanoff, and had surrounded the Prince's palace. The officer on duty, Captain Zafiroff, who had been won over to the side of the conspiracy, had withdrawn the sentinels over the various entrances to the palace, so that no resistance or premature alarm was to be feared from them. At the same time, Major Grueff, the Governor of the Junkerschule, had caused the cadets to be aroused, and in a short speech had informed them that they were summoned for a patriotic deed of the greatest gravity, that the removal of the Prince, who had been a traitor to Russia, was intended, and that he (Grueff) counted on their full co-operation. It sounds almost inconceivable, but it is nevertheless a fact, that not one single one of these young men evinced the smallest sign of repugnance to the treachery proposed to them. They all belonged to the more educated classes; they were all destined for the status of officers; they must all have been able to form a just appreciation of the duties they owed, both towards

their sovereign, and to their own position; and yet not a single one raised his voice against Grueff; and just as now at the commencement of their crime, so also later on during its execution, they did not merely carry out orders, but they declared openly that they did so *con amore*. The phenomenon is susceptible of but one explanation; only by a long and careful preparation, and by a systematic course of demoralisation, could Grueff have succeeded in so completely deadening all sense of right and duty, as to convert these young men into ready and willing instruments for the perpetration of a vile and base crime. Accordingly the cadets marched on the palace, where the chief rôle in the play had been assigned to them.

The surrounding of the palace had not been carried out however without some noise, and the first of its occupants to awake was the Prince's Bulgarian servant, Dimitri. He ran at once to his master's bed-room, awoke him, and, handing him a revolver, cried "Highness, flee, they are going to murder you!" The Prince sprang up and ran half-dressed through a corridor, whence a glass door led into the garden. As he was about to open it, some soldiers, pointing their bayonets at him with shouts of "Back, back," forced him to shut the door again. The Prince on this ascended to the top story, where he at once perceived that the entire palace was surrounded by soldiers. In the meantime, it having become evident that the palace was thoroughly aroused, further concealment of their plans was useless, and the soldiers, acting under the commands of their officers, broke into loud shouts, and the garden and courtyard, but a few moments before hushed in silence, now re-echoed with one long

"*dolu, dolu!*" At the same moment, the men commenced firing off their rifles, partly with a view to daunting the occupants of the palace, partly no doubt as an encouragement to themselves. The firing and the cries of "*dolu*" (down with him) left no doubt in the Prince's mind, that he was in présence of a well-organized military revolt, and he hurriedly returned to the ground floor to dress himself with all possible speed. Hardly had he thrown on his uniform and advanced into the anteroom, when he saw himself surrounded by officers and cadets. They pressed round him on all sides with wild cries, the officers threatening him with their revolvers, the cadets brandishing their bayonets in his face. Especially distinguished for bluster and noise was Captain Dimitrieff, who apparently had nerved himself to his crime with drink. In the middle of this wild tumult, the Prince caught sight of his brother, Prince Francis Joseph, who, awaking with the first alarm, was on the point of hurrying to the Prince, when he was stopped by the conspirators. The conspirators unanimously called on the Prince to abdicate, and demanded he should with his own hand write the deed. On the Prince refusing, Captain Dimitrieff seated himself at a small table, on which generally lay the visitors' book, tore a sheet out, and attempted to draw up the document. What between excitement and drink, he was incapable of accomplishing anything beyond a few illegible hieroglyphics. He accordingly yielded his seat to a cadet, who at his dictation wrote out a formal deed of abdication. During this interval, Grueff kept his revolver pointed in the Prince's face, but did not venture either to address him or look at him, not even when the Prince said, "So you are also with them?" He had still some feelings of shame left.

The Prince paid but a scanty meed of attention to the document, which was read to him, and which he subscribed with the words "*Gott schütze Bulgarien, Alexander.*"* One can well understand the feeling of infinite disgust which the Prince experienced at this moment, and that his only thought and desire was to end this repulsive scene as quickly as possible. He had no reason to believe but that his entire army—that army he had loved so well—had turned traitors; and, though indeed it was apparent later that the army did not in the remotest degree participate in the feelings of the conspirators, yet what had taken place was in itself quite sufficient to overcome the stoutest heart. Nothing worse than this treachery could now befall him, and, buoyed up with this idea, the Prince allowed the conspirators to conduct him to the War Office, where fresh humiliations however awaited him.

Among other officers he was here received with scornful jeers by Bendereff, whom others hastened to imitate. The Prince having expressed his desire to leave Sofia as soon as possible and by night, Bendereff met him with the reply, "No, in full daylight! All the world shall see how you set off on your travels." The Prince demanded to see Karaveloff and his private secretary, Menges, but in each case was refused, as was also the permission to take a domestic servant with him. On the other hand they allowed him to write a note to Menges, asking him to send him money and articles of apparel, which were as a matter of fact afterwards delivered to the Prince.

At 5 a.m. nine four-horse carriages, of the class,

* God protect Bulgaria. Alexander.

known as "phaetons," drew up before the war office, and it was intimated to the Prince that he was to take his departure. The Prince entered the first with Captain Kardjieff, Prince Francis Joseph the second with Captain Zafiroff, on the box of each alongside the coachman a cadet seated himself, while the remaining seven carriages were filled with the escort, all of whom belonged to the Junkerschule. Several officers surrounded the carriage, jeering the Prince derisively, Captain Dimitrieff stood grinning at him while he gnawed an apple, and indeed Major Grueff was the only one with sufficient gentlemanly feeling left to give the departing Prince a military salute.

Without attracting much attention in the early morning hour, the cortège proceeded along the Orkhanie road past the Body Guard and Artillery barracks. In front of the latter a battery was drawn up, the Commander of which, shewed the Prince military honours, though he maintained otherwise a perfectly passive attitude. He was one of a number of officers, who, while cognisant of the plot, would neither participate actively in it, nor oppose it. At the stone, which marked the fifteenth kilometre, they quitted the high-road, a cross-country track being now followed which led to a monastery, situated at twenty-seven kilometres from Sofia. On the road thither a division of cadets was encountered. They had been already marched out for the purpose of occupying the monastery during the night as a garrison. During the drive all the villages lying on the road had been sedulously avoided, manifestly for the fear that was entertained that, should they recognise the Prince, the people would make an effort to free him. It was intimated to the Prince that, should an attempt be made

to rescue him, or should he attempt to communicate with any person whatever, other than the officers accompanying him, the latter had strict orders then and there to shoot him. Prince Alexander's own opinion is that, had any obstacle presented itself during the journey to his abduction, these officers would unhesitatingly have put this threat into execution.

In the monastery a small dirty room was pointed out to the Prince, as that in which he was to pass the night. Here the Prince was able for the first time quietly to contemplate his situation, and it is not difficult to picture to oneself the bitterness of the feelings that he was a prey to, as also the sentiment of deep regret for his all too blind trustfulness and the many unheeded warnings. Only two days previous to the blow, had he received an anonymous letter, which, while giving various details, disclosed to him the plan of the conspirators in so far as the Struma Regiment was concerned. The Prince though he did actually read the letter, which, as afterwards transpired, had been written by two officers of the Regiment, Captain Nishkoff and First-Lieutenant Markoff, had stuck it into his pocket, without bestowing on it a second thought, or imparting its contents to anyone. He could not bring himself to believe that such perfidy was possible. On the day previous to the revolt he had received a second warning, this time verbally from an officer who told him that there was some sort of conspiracy being formed amongst the officers against him, though what it exactly was he could not say. This warning also remained unheeded by the Prince, who rather blamed the officer for venturing, in the absence of decided proof, to cast such an accusation on his comrades.

The delay, which took place at the monastery, is explained by the fact that the conspirators could not proceed further till they received information as to the success of the plot in other districts. It was first of all necessary to learn whether the yacht "Alexander" was in the hands of the rebels, as otherwise it would be impossible to continue the Prince's journey. Had they not succeeded in obtaining possession of the yacht, the rebels would probably have conducted the Prince to the nearest frontier, in this case the Servian, and there have set him at liberty. In the event of the conspiracy completely miscarrying, they held in the person of the Prince a valuable hostage for their immunity from punishment. As however the "Alexander" was already in the hands of the rebels, and as the tenor of the first despatches appeared equally favourable to the Provisional Government, orders were accordingly given to continue the journey to Rahova, where the "Alexander" was stated to be in waiting.

Vratsha was chosen as the night-halt, all houses in the town being closed. Some gendarmes had arrived shortly before, who, acting under the orders of the Provisional Government, had forbidden the inhabitants under pain of death to quit their dwellings, or to take any notice of anything that might happen during the night. The Prince found an opportunity of exchanging a few words with a non-commissioned officer, but was interrupted by Kardjieff, who reiterated his former threat to shoot him on the spot should he again try anything of the sort. Day and night the Prince was subjected to a strict watch, accompanied by every kind of indignity, his jailors conducting themselves with almost incredible coarseness.

Were they not too disgusting, some incidents might be recounted, which would make the reader's hair stand on end.

Early the following morning they were again on the road, and towards the end of the journey, Kardjieff began to be more communicative. According to him, the real author of the plot was the Russian Military Attaché in Sofia, Colonel Sakharoff. He it was who had enrolled the first conspirators. He had promised the officers in the name of the Tzar, that all who took part in the conspiracy against the Prince, should be taken into the Russian service in the same relative rank that they then held. Sakharoff having succeeded in winning over the War Office officials, rolls were, through their agency, forwarded to other officers, who, by signing them, bound themselves to take part in the dethronement of the Prince. The following remark of Kardjieff's is worthy of note, that he himself had nothing whatever against the Prince, but it was impossible for the best man to retain the throne of Bulgaria, for the people were still too uneducated to be capable of appreciating his worth, while no reliance was to be placed on the upper classes, especially when every species of intrigue from without had been brought to bear on them.

On arrival at Rahova on Monday, the 23rd August, the Prince was immediately conducted to the landing-place for steamers, where the Austrian steam-tug "Adler" was lying alongside the yacht "Alexander." In the offices of the Austrian-Hungarian Danube Steam Navigation Company the Prince had the opportunity of exchanging a few words with the Company's Agent, who told him that the captain of the "Adler" was prepared to assist

in setting him free. The "Adler," he said, was faster than the yacht, and was lying ready with steam up. Should the Prince succeed in jumping on board, she would immediately put off, and would land him in Rumania. The realisation of this well-conceived plan was however quite out of the question, so close a watch was kept on the Prince.

When the Prince proceeded on board the yacht, he noticed several officers on the landing-stage who were personally unknown to him, and also Captain Kabaroff, who was on board the yacht with a company of the Danube Regiment from Rustchuk. This officer was in chief military command, and had with him, as technically in charge of the boat, a Bulgarian naval officer. The technical commander was however in reality the old pilot, Scholz, very much against his will, but compelled by Kabaroff under pain of death. The latter stood by him on the bridge, revolver in hand, and vowed instantly to shoot him if the boat swerved from her course or ran on a sand-bank. The Prince was immediately conducted to the dining-saloon on deck, round which soldiers were posted. He was forbidden in the strictest terms to go to a window, or to enter into any communication whatever with his guards. In addition the windows were fast closed, which rendered the voyage, under the rays of the burning summer sun, a veritable torture. The cadets, who were to have returned from Rahova to Sofia, appeared to find the deeds of heroism which they had so far accomplished so much to their taste and gratification, that they requested and obtained permission to take part in the further journey on board the yacht.

Since the moment when the Prince was first aroused in

the palace on the night of 21st August, he had seen none but traitors around him, who all conducted themselves in a more or less mean and insolent manner towards him. According to the intelligence, which they caused to reach him, the entire army with the whole of the country had risen against him, while all the Bulgarians had declared that they held him in the light of the destroyer of the country. Indeed, they pushed their lies to the length of affirming, that the strictness of the watch that was kept on the Prince was absolutely necessary, as otherwise the insurgent populace would have lynched him. After seeing with his own eyes his army in revolt at Sofia; after being conducted as a prisoner through half the length of the land, without a single man coming to his rescue; and finally when he saw himself on his own yacht, handed over to a fresh body of traitorous troops, the Prince could not well do otherwise than credit these reports. Here on board the "Alexander" he was to hear the first friendly word, and to learn that at least he was not forsaken and betrayed by all. A young Bulgarian naval cadet, Gostopriémoff, was the dove, who brought to the Prince the first olive-branch of consolation. Repeatedly he used to creep to the Prince's side and tell him with tears the real position of affairs on the boat, and how the Commandant, Kabaroff, was by no means sure of his men. The sailors were in absolute despair and wept at having to carry off the Prince. The company of the Danube Regiment on board was divided into two lots, one having charge of the sailors, the other of the Prince, so as to prevent all possibility of a rescue being attempted. The men of the Danube Regiment were again in their turn watched by the officers and

cadets, as they also were not trusted and, it was feared, might rise in favour of the Prince. From this friend in need the Prince learnt that the intention was to carry him to Reni, information which filled him with the utmost dejection; for infamously as the Bulgarians had treated him, worse was probably to be feared at the hands of the Russians. What however the young naval cadet was unable to give the Prince any information about, he himself being in ignorance, was the report of the rising of the entire country along with the army, which had taken place in the interval. Without having the smallest inkling of these events, the Prince arrived at Reni, on Tuesday, the 24th August. An officer was immediately sent on there to report to the Russian authorities, that on board the yacht was a state prisoner, whom it was desired to hand over to them. What the exact nature was of the negotiations, which were here carried on with the Russians, cannot with any certainty be stated. It would appear that at first it was not considered desirable to receive the Prince over from the mutineers, for he remained that night on board the boat, and it was only on the following morning, that instructions were received from the Russians to the effect that the "state prisoner" might at last be set on shore.

Russia's position at this juncture was curious. For, although it was notorious that she alone had instigated the revolution, it was yet hardly feasible for her openly to league herself with a military revolt, to the extent of receiving the Prince over as a prisoner from the hands of the conspirators, and keeping him still further in restraint. It is not however the first occasion, on which Russia has with cynical levity, ridden rough-shod over international

rights and laws, and there is strong ground for the belief that on this occasion the enormity was actually contemplated of simply keeping the Prince in Russian custody. If not, it is difficult to understand why the Russians chose rather to direct the Bulgarians to bring the Prince to Reni, instead of conducting him across the nearest frontier by the shortest road. The stormy outburst with which public opinion received the news of the scandalous act of the 21st August, may have caused the Russians to reflect, as also perhaps not less the sympathy which was evinced in high quarters for Prince Alexander. Russian policy has often shewn that, while at times it will not hesitate in the utmost brutality, yet it thoroughly understands how to yield with dexterity when brought face to face with really serious obstacles.

One thing however it did *not* understand, and that was how to give to its actions the stamp of straightforwardness and spontaneity, the petty methods adopted being but little worthy of a great Power. It is true that from St. Petersburg the Agence Havas published the following official despatch:—"The Emperor himself immediately caused the order to be given to permit the Prince to land, and to continue his journey exactly as he might please." If the Emperor Alexander did in reality issue this order, then his commands were *directly* disobeyed—a thing which is not commonly the rule in Russia! No one can possibly maintain that Prince Alexander, as long as he remained in Russian territory, was a free agent. When he quitted the ship he was surrounded by fully-armed Bulgarian soldiers, who escorted him to the Burgomaster of Reni, and delivered him over to the latter with every formality. Now for

the first time did he address a few words to the Bulgarian soldiers, in which he expressed his hope that "the future Prince might love Bulgaria and the Bulgarian army as well as he had loved them." After this he merely changed his jailors, for he was just as closely watched in Reni as he had been on board the yacht; to such an extent was this the case, that even in his bedroom a gendarme was posted as sentinel. His wish to set out from Reni to Rumania met with a most decided refusal: indeed, at first they tried to hinder his departure, while at the same time they refused to allow him a special train. Finally it came to this, that he was free to depart, but *only* on the condition that he took the road *viâ* Podvolotchiska, which hardly quite coincides with "continuing his journey exactly as he might please." The ground was burning under the Prince's feet; quite apart from the fact, that so long as he remained on Russian soil he had no sort of security for his personal safety, he longed to reach some spot where he could at least learn what had really taken place in Bulgaria, for his "hosts" in Reni withheld from him all news respecting the events in that country, and also prevented his gaining any information from private individuals. Thus at a moment when, accompanied by the Russian Counsellor, Arshineff, and a host of gendarmes, he approached the Austrian frontier-station, the Prince, the most closely interested, knew less of the more recent events than any child in Europe. The joyous reception which he met with in Austria, shewed him one thing, that in Europe at any rate, he would find that appreciation and goodwill, which he had *apparently* failed to inspire in Bulgaria.

CHAPTER V.

THE REBELLION TRIUMPHANT.

Sofia in the hands of the rebels—Bishop Clement celebrates a *Te Deum*, and Bogdanoff, the Counsellor to the Embassy, receives the "adoration of the people" in front of the Russian Consulate—The Provisional Government forges the signatures of Karaveloff and others of the Prince's adherents—Thanks to these forgeries, the provinces accept the Provisional Government, and the Army takes the oath of allegiance—The Revolution seems to have finally succeeded.

We must here take leave of the Prince for a short time, and return to Bulgaria, to see what shape matters had assumed there. Some hours after the departure of the Prince from Sofia, as soon as it might be supposed that he was at a fair distance from his capital, the houses were opened and the inhabitants allowed into the streets. Everyone rushed towards the palace, and it soon became known that the Prince had been dethroned by a military revolt. In front of the palace Captain Bendereff was on horseback, receiving the congratulations of the Russophiles, as well as those who desired to be so considered. The hotel-keeper, Kessjakoff, who formerly had held the rank of an officer in the Russian service, a personage of the very worst reputation, galloped through the streets, making such a hideous row, that Major Grueff had to damp his ardour with the threat that, unless he were not moderately quiet, he would have him arrested. The populace appeared stupified by the events, and at any rate it was absolutely impossible for them to reverse the past. Those individuals, of whom there might be a

chance that they would show fight, as for instance Major Popoff, the Commandant of the Alexander Regiment, the Prince's aides-de-camp, the Private Secretary, Menges, and many officers, were placed under surveillance in their dwellings as prisoners, an exception being made in the case of the Commandant of the Prince's Body Guard, Captain Zankoff, as it was surmised, and, as the event proved, correctly so, that he lacked the necessary decision of character boldly to attempt a rescue, though that was, of all men's, his duty. During the night the sad work of revolution had been left entirely to the soldiery, but with the dawn of day the civilian element ✓ of the plot also came to light. Their first act was to repair to the Cathedral, where a thanksgiving *Te Deum* was sung for "the liberation from Prince Battenberg." The Very Reverend Bishop Clement, that ornament of the Church, who for seven long years had prayed himself black in the face for the Prince, presided at the solemnity with the deep tones of innermost conviction, and gave the perjured conspirators the blessing of the Church. The number of the devout present was not very great—and not very select, for the gendarmes seized everyone who happened to be passing along the street, and conducted him to the Cathedral. But each man that went inside found one or two franks slipped into his hand. The news of this extraordinary generosity spread like wildfire, and enticed many a lover of a *pour-boire* into the house of God. Of what was going on few or indeed none beyond the conspirators had any idea; and the story goes that one young peasant, who had been forced to the *Te Deum*, cried out, "Thanks be to God, our Prince is being married to the Tzar's daughter." The

story *si non e vero, e ben trovato*, and it is not indeed devoid of some intrinsic probability.

Apart from its blasphemous character, this *Te Deum* service had in reality little or no significance. All the more important state matters in Bulgaria are ushered in with a *Te Deum*, and the Bulgarians, true to their methodical character, simply followed the lines of ancient custom. Quite new on the other hand, was the subsequent scene, which was intended to represent the apotheosis of the Revolution, viz. : the adoration of the Russian representative, M. Bogdanoff, in front of the Russian consulate. Thither with some of their adherents betook themselves the Reverend Clement and the virtuous Zankoff, in order to inform Bogdanoff that the great work had been successfully carried through, and in addition had already received the Church's blessing. The ever zealous gendarmes drove a number of the lowest populace to the consulate, whither also flocked, as is always the case on such occasions, a number of persons impelled by motives of curiosity. What followed was very remarkable. Cheers for the Tzar resounded from the crowd, and then on the balcony appeared the representative of the Ruler of all the Russias, M. Bogdanoff, Counsellor to the Embassy, supported on either side by the rebel leaders Zankoff and Clement, while in the background other conspirators formed a worthy appendix. From the balcony Bogdanoff delivered a speech, in which he assured the good folk of the affection, which His Majesty the Tzar would ever entertain for the Bulgarian people, and that from henceforth they might count upon his favours and help. On this Clement stretched out his arms and pronounced his blessing on the people. "On your knees,

on your knees!" cried a few of the Zankoffists, who were more specially seized by the solemnity of the occasion, and the obedient crowd then and there knelt down, a minority who were possessed with some ridiculous notions on the score of cleanliness, not doing so indeed without some inward murmurs, as they thought of the filthy street mud. What will a man not do however to avoid a sound thrashing? Though Bogdanoff did not say so, he no doubt thought like the young girl after her first ball, "These hours have been the happiest moments of my life."

It is a great pity that hours and moments do not last for ever, and that so often in a man's life the bitterest reaction follows close in the wake of the most intense joy. For the time being however, it had a most convincing look, when they were able to telegraph the news over the wide world, that the entire population of Sofia, rid of the incubus of Prince Alexander, which had weighed on them like a huge nightmare, animated with one common feeling of love and loyalty to the Tzar, had met together and given expression to their feelings in such clear and convincing terms.

✓ The conspirators were too practical a set to waste much time over empty declarations; they were quite alive to the fact, that the capture of the Prince and the homage to Bogdanoff by no means meant the completion of the work, and that, though Sofia might be, yet Bulgaria was not yet conquered. It was not sufficient to have got rid of the Prince, but a Provisional Government would have to be installed in his place, and (and herein lay the kernel of the nut) recognised by the army and country at large.

It must be conceded that in this matter also, the con-

spirators had gone to work with as much cunning as self-appreciation. They had with good reason considered, that it would be a difficult task to induce the army to acquiesce in the expulsion of Prince Alexander. It was moreover certain from the very first, that the plot had not a chance of success were the people to be told the truth, and to be allowed to get wind of the fact that the dethronement of the Prince was in reality the work of a small knot of military conspirators supported by Russia, a minority in fact, which, when considered with reference to the majority, who held quite other views, was almost contemptible. Since Russia had in 1885 opposed the realisation of the national aspirations of Bulgaria; since more especially by the recall of her officers just before the Servian war, she had done all that lay in her power to insure the overthrow of the Bulgarian army; since that time the Russian party in Bulgaria had consisted solely of a few place-hunters, who, under the leadership or rather the firm of Zankoff, had placed themselves at the disposal of Russia, in order, with her help, to regain possession of well-paid government posts and other advantages, in the promising of which the Russians evinced no niggardliness. To attempt to gain the adhesion of the country to the Revolution on the strength of these people's names, was quite out of the question. Some way out of the difficulty must be devised. Either more powerful forces must be won over to the side of the Revolution, or—must be obtained by fraud. The first alternative was not possible; accordingly it was decided to have recourse to the second.

The first act of the rebel-government was to publish a proclamation, which was already by the morning of

the 21st August placarded about Sofia; it was drawn up in the following words:—

“Prince Alexander has renounced the throne of Bulgaria for ever, and has signed a formal abdication, having convinced himself that his rule is injurious to the Bulgarian people. In view of these extraordinary events a Provisional Government has been formed, which will carry on the administration of the country, until the Grand National Assembly shall come to some decision. The Provisional Government declares life, property, and honour, both of Bulgarians and of foreigners, to be guaranteed, and it is persuaded that the citizens of Bulgaria will, without distinction of religion, nationality, or party, co-operate for the maintenance of quiet and order in the country. The Bulgarian people may rest assured that the Great Tzar of Russia, the Sovereign Protector of Bulgaria, will not leave the country without his mighty protection. Long live the Bulgarian Nation!”

With these sonorous phrases concluded the proclamation of the men who had dug the grave of Bulgarian nationality. Here we are confronted with the first untruth; the violent capture is represented exactly as if Prince Alexander had pronounced his abdication of his own free will, or under the persuasion of unanswerable arguments. Once the path of lying entered on, there was no hesitation evinced in following it further, and supplementing the lies with public forgeries of the most criminal description. The first report of the change of government was telegraphed at once to every prefect and superior military officer, and bore the signature

“Karaveloff.” Immediately on this followed an explanatory telegram, couched in the following terms :—

“Prince Battenberg was dethroned this afternoon. Place the army under the orders of the present Government, which is composed of Karaveloff, Stamakoff, Zankoff, Burmoff, C. Ikonomoff, Velitshoff, Madsharoff, Radoslavoff, Grekoff, and the War Minister Major Nikiforoff.

The Commander-in-Chief of the
Bulgarian Army,

MAJOR GRUEFF.”

The impression created by this despatch, not only abroad, but in Bulgaria itself, was one of downright bewilderment. From the above names it appeared as if all parties had agreed to get rid of Prince Alexander, their union—a problem which hitherto had appeared incapable of solution—having actually taken place on the programme of the “deposition of the Prince.” Nor was it merely a union of political parties, but of bitter personal foes, of the Prince’s notorious friends with his equally notorious enemies. What had happened appeared incredible, inconceivable, and at the first glance seemed to admit of but one explanation, that the whole intelligence of Bulgaria had succumbed before the might of the ruble—that a whole nation had sold, not only their Prince, but themselves.

Such was in a word the principal impression produced abroad by the list of names of the members of the Provisional Government. In Bulgaria itself, that is in the provinces, the general opinion was more confused. Here, where the various relations were much better understood than abroad, a marked impression of mistrust as to the

genuineness of the list manifested itself. At the same time this mistrust was confined to a minority of the population. The majority were inclined to credit the genuineness of the signatures, the name of Karaveloff specially commending itself to them, as a pledge that the abdication of the Prince was dictated by altogether extraordinary circumstances, and was not the result of force or compulsion. It was known, more especially in the army, that the Prince had on more than one occasion expressed his readiness to lay down his crown, should he be convinced, that its further retention by him was incompatible with the interests of Bulgaria. It was supposed that such was now the case; that the impossibility of the Prince's continuance on the throne had become so suddenly, and withal so overwhelmingly clear, that he, with the rest of the political personages, had hastened to bring matters to a climax. The general opinion was that Bulgaria must have been threatened with some sudden and unforeseen disaster; that the country so to speak had found itself standing on the brink of an abyss; and that at this juncture the Prince had enacted the part of Curtius with the concurrence of all the statesmen of Bulgaria, who had seen no other means of escape from the terrible danger. The opinion became general that the Prince had abdicated, because Russia had threatened to declare war against Bulgaria should he remain, which, taken in conjunction with the notorious acts of ill-will and attempts on the part of that Power to foment disturbances, appeared to be by no means improbable. Although people showed more caution in Bulgaria than abroad, yet the list drawn up by the rebels succeeded in effecting its object, all the troops, in accordance with the

orders, taking the oath of allegiance to the Provisional Government, with the exception of course of those who happened to be absent on leave and those officers who, being attached to the body of the Prince or on his personal staff, were for this reason under surveillance in their own dwellings. In addition to the above the oath was refused also by the Regimental Commandant, Captain Marinoff, with the whole of the Plevna Regiment, who, on receiving the news of the installation of the Provisional Government, returned the answer, "I will never believe that the Bulgarian Nation has deserted the Hero of Slivnitsa"; also by Captain Veltsheff with a battalion of the Philippopolis Regiment, and the Battalion Commandant, Captain von Mach at Burgas. As regards Popoff and the Alexander Regiment, one may safely say that the oath was subscribed to not only with a *reservatio mentalis*, but with the fixed purpose of, through his surrender, regaining his liberty, or in other words the power to overthrow the Provisional Government. The morality of this reservation may appear doubtful; but the fact that this act of perjury was the sole means by which he could hope to give effect to his oath of allegiance to the Prince, will go far towards its justification.

With the taking of the oath by the Alexander Regiment, the Provisional Government considered their chief difficulty overcome; and when, in addition, the news arrived from the interior that the authorities were everywhere submissive, and that the troops had taken the oath of allegiance, Messrs. Zankoff and Co. fully believed that this fraudulent manœuvre had succeeded, and that their revolution had been finally acquiesced in by the entire country. The Provisional Government

even placed themselves in communication, though for the time being merely of an official nature, with the foreign Consuls General, and for a whole day it seemed as if Bulgaria had done nothing more than exchange one regular and legitimate government for another, possessing identically the same properties as the first.

"*Lügen haben aber kurze Beine*,"* and the Government of M. Zankoff was about to learn that now-a-days truth cannot be long concealed. The acquiescence of the Bulgarians in the accomplished deed had only been rendered possible through a systematically woven tissue of lies. Once let the truth eke out, and the position would be completely and radically changed.

* Lies don't live long.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LEADERS OF THE CONSPIRACY.

Grueff—Bendereff—Dimitrieff—Bishop Clement—Dragan Zankoff.

I propose at this point to devote a few pages to a brief sketch of the career and character of the men, who chiefly contributed to bring about the overthrow of Prince Alexander, and to plunge their country into misery.

Foremost among the military participators in the conspiracy appears Major Grueff, for he it was who on the successful issue of the attack on the palace, was named Commander-in-Chief of the Bulgarian army. Personally I am not acquainted with him, and on this account I am obliged to confine myself to what I have heard of him from different quarters. He is still a young man of some thirty years of age, and had passed some time as a student in the Russian "Kriegsakademie," where he had acquitted himself well. On the outbreak of the Servian war he was in command of a battery at Shumla, when he was given the command of the 2nd Artillery Regiment. He arrived too late however on the theatre of war to take any part in the fights before Pirot. On the conclusion of peace he was given the commandantship of the "Junkerschule," and was repeatedly spoken of as the probable successor to Nikiforoff as War Minister, should the malady of the latter officer increase. His bearing is described as quiet and reserved, but he nevertheless succeeded in attaching to himself many friends. Specially good were his relations with Karaveloff and

Nikiforoff, and he was also the friend of the President of the Chamber, Stambuloff. His conduct was to many a complete enigma, and I have heard it repeatedly said by men who knew him, that he was incapable of corruption: an assertion, by the way, which failed to convince me, as otherwise I am at a loss to imagine any adequate motive for his base actions. For the rest the character of this man is marked by such surprising and contradictory idiosyncracies, that one is almost tempted to class him with those, whom a distinct moral deficiency has rendered criminals, and who are hardly if at all conscious of their criminality. Very indicative of the man would the following scene appear, which was related to me by an eye-witness. On the afternoon of the 21st August, Grueff encountered the War Minister, Nikiforoff, and tried to induce him to place the War Office under the orders of the Provisional Government. Nikiforoff, having listened to Grueff for some time, turned away from him with the words "Silence, and leave us in peace. ! Is it not enough for you that you have already so dishonoured me?" But Grueff, who appeared incapable of understanding such a line of thought, continued to press him in the following terms, "But you will have nothing whatever to do with it, you need not read a single despatch or sign a single order; all that we ask is that you will allow us to use your name in the list of Ministers for a few days." To be noticed too is the deep dejection which, soon after the success of the *coup d'état*, seized on him, and which would appear to argue an extreme weakness of character. I know of a letter which Grueff wrote from the Tirnova prison to a very influential personage, who had formerly been a friend of his, in which he

expresses himself somewhat as follows, "Never should I have dreamt it possible that I should have been in such a position! we thought to act for the best for Bulgaria, and now we are the object of the hate and execration of the entire population. Every evening a crowd collects in front of the windows of our prison and levels threats of death at us because, they say, we have ruined Bulgaria. The only request we (Bendereff and I) have to make in this position is that we may not be transported to Sofia, as we are certain that the mob would murder us during the journey. In all Bulgaria there is only one single spot where we can be sure of our lives—the prison!" Let those, who are interested in psychological research, complete for themselves the picture of the man!

The second to be named is Captain Bendereff, and it is he who in my view played the most important part, both in consequence of his position as Acting War Minister, and also on account of his exceptional natural endowments. That he has stained in the most shameful manner the honour of the Bulgarian officer, does not in the least alter the fact, that during the war he had rendered most important services, more especially at Slivnitza, where he commanded the right wing, and distinguished himself by his courage and presence of mind in no common degree. More recently, and notably after the crime, the reproach was cast at him that he had at Slivnitza advanced in too independent a manner, and by so doing had at one moment imperilled the fate of the Bulgarian army in the highest degree. I cannot allow this reproach to weigh very heavily, for the simple reason that the position at Slivnitza was in itself so intrinsically desperate, that a desperate advance could

alone redeem it. I was personally acquainted with Bendereff, and it was only in Sofia itself that I satisfied myself of his criminality; for without the most decided proof it was hardly possible for me to believe in the guilt of an officer who had left the best of impressions on me. In itself it is perfectly inconceivable: here was a man, who, while hardly more than a youth, had attained to fame and distinction in abundance; had filled the most influential post in the War Office; and was even acting for the Minister. Before he received his last post in the War Office, he had, as representative of the War Minister, held the chief command of the whole of the troops in East Rumelia, in which position he had evinced very considerable powers of organization. How—quite irrespective of the dictates of common decency—could a clever and intelligent man like Bendereff in such an enviable position allow himself to be seduced into openly acting against the Prince, and thus by his own act cut away the branch on which he sat? Never and under no circumstances could Bendereff ever become under Russian rule what he had been under Prince Alexander, and he was confessedly shrewd enough to know that himself. If he, in spite of this, and in full possession of his mental faculties, sacrificed everything that either the present or the future could offer him—*how considerable a sum must it have been that was paid him in return for this self-extinction, this self-abasement!* It was Bendereff who as Acting War Minister made the necessary arrangements to secure the removal of the Alexander Regiment from Sofia, and it was by his orders, as representative of the War Minister, that the Struma Regiment left Köstendil. Without him the sur-

prise would have been impossible, and in proportion as he must have reaped the largest sum, so also does the largest meed of shame attach to him. Personally Bendereff produced a very pleasing impression, and in his outward appearance, in spite of irregularity of features, was rather elegant and attractive. He was said though I cannot say that I had observed this, to be a good deal fonder of the bottle than was necessary; it is also said that his military laurels had turned his head, and had produced an unbounded ambition. It is certain that, as he was conducting the Prince from the palace to the War Office, he addressed him with the words, "This would not have happened had you made me a Major!" I have also been told that Bendereff had already during his stay in the Military College in Russia given evidence of boundless ambition; there he had succeeded by dint of indefatigable labour in gaining a place amongst the few pupils, whose names are, on account of their uncommon attainments, handed down to posterity in letters of gold on the walls of the principal hall of the College. It is said that, shortly after the declaration of war, he asked Prince Alexander whether promotions would be made for bravery. That the Prince answered his question in the affirmative, but that he subsequently was not promoted, is said to have inspired Bendereff with an implacable hatred towards the Prince, although he must have been perfectly aware, that the sole reason for not promoting him was, that various and equally deserving men amongst his comrades should not be superseded. In spite of all this, and in opposition to the opinion of many of Bendereff's acquaintances, I still to this day do not believe that this was the reason that

induced him to enter the conspiracy, for the desire to avenge his non-promotion could not have counted for anything when compared with the sort of injury to himself that his crime would infallibly bring in its train. There is but one reasonable view of his conduct,—that simply he was bribed.

As the third in the conspiracy I must name Captain Radko Dimitrieff; he who with Grueff forced his way into the palace, and exhibited such coarse vulgarity, that I am almost ashamed to have to acknowledge, that I got to know him intimately during the war. He too like Bendereff had a very winning manner, and was beyond doubt an exceedingly well-informed officer. He hailed from the East-Rumelian army, where he was to begin with aide-de-camp to Aleko Pasha (the Bulgarian Prince Vagorides), and afterwards became Second Chief-of-the-Staff of the East-Rumelian Militia. He had specially good recommendations from the Russian Colonel Tshitshagoff, and also, it was stated, from Drigalski Pasha. After the war he became head of a section of the War Office, in which capacity the more important matters concerning individual officers, such as their postings, etc., came under his cognisance. Such a position was undoubtedly one of special importance for the conspirators, as its holder could so easily influence the posting and transfer of officers, and thus too insure the composition of a regiment being in conformity with his own views. Thus only a few days previous to the outrage, Dimitrieff had caused several “unreliable” officers of the Struma Regiment to be detached on special duties at a distance from the regiment. What became of Dimitrieff was for a long time veiled in obscurity.

After the break-down of the conspiracy he fled from Sofia, probably with a view to seeking refuge either in Servia or Rumania. A little later it was reported that a man, answering the description of Dimitrieff was wandering about in the neighbourhood of Vratscha. Orders were immediately despatched for his arrest, but he was not to be found. Finally he turned up in St. Petersburg, where it was said, though I could hardly believe it, he was received with the greatest distinction. Grueff, Bendereff, and Dimitrieff have all three joined the Russian Military College.

Besides the above should be mentioned Major Stoyanoff, formerly a Russian officer, who had served in the East-Rumelian army, and was, after the war, appointed Commandant of the Struma Regiment. In the previous year it was only after the conclusion of the battle of Slivnitza that he reached the theatre of war. He commanded the Bulgarian troops at the battle of the Dragoman Pass, when his conduct was most gallant. On my becoming acquainted with him later, he impressed me neither one way nor the other. Certainly at that time I had no suspicion that this man would ever be called to play any special rôle. He cannot have been an expensive article; men of his class are bought for a good dose of vodka and a handful of rubles.

Besides him, in the second rank of the conspirators, we have yet to notice Captain Zafiroff, who superintended the actual removal of the Prince from Sofia to Reni. I have failed to discover anything calling for special remark concerning him, while the very reverse is the case with Lieutenant Pakoff, who accompanied Grueff and Dimitrieff into the palace. He is deserving of very special

mention, from the fact that Prince Alexander was a personal benefactor to him, having unceasingly helped him in money matters. Finally, Captain Slatarski must be mentioned, the Acting Commandant of the First Artillery Regiment, who during the Servian war lost a battery at Vrapsa, for which, at the time, many officers bitterly blamed him. He seems to have taken his misfortune to heart, and to have formed the determination of repairing it by some eminent deed.

In addition to the traitors in uniform we have the civilian traitors, and as Bishop Clement appeared as the President of the Provisional Government, he may be first of all considered. As a matter of fact the trouble will not repay itself, for there is nothing of any particular interest to say about this M. Clement, except that he is an individual into whose constitution enter the lowest instincts. As a young man he had already gained most disadvantageous distinction, and various stories of a very dubious character are told of him. He was educated to the priestly office in Russia, and his preferment had been surprisingly rapid. In Tirnova, where he was first of all appointed Bishop, his scandalous mode of life was such that the Exarch transferred him to Sofia, where for the rest his conduct was even more shameless. That this depraved and ignorant voluptuary exercised any special influence over the conspirators, I do not for an instant believe, but rather incline to the view that they took him more as a sort of decorative article, as something to shew. Nelidoff, the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople, is supposed to have said that, of the money spent in bribery, two thirds were expended amongst the higher ranks of the priest-hood. If that is true, Clement cannot complain

that his services were undervalued. Should the Russians ever come into the country, they will not hesitate to load this worthy servant of God with honours and dignities. Perhaps they will again give him money, on which, by the way, he sets by far the most store.

Besides Clement we have M. Dragan Zankoff, by whose name a Bulgarian party has the rather doubtful honour of being called. Zankoff as a young man was a very smart lad, a certain European culture gaining him a good deal of respect among his countrymen. Towards the end of his fiftieth year he formed the intention of embracing Islamism, but found it more paying to become a catholic, and to enter the service of the Jesuits, who at that time were attempting to catholicise Bulgaria. Zankoff's practical mind however soon told him that there was nothing to be gained in Bulgaria with catholicism. He accordingly repented him of the error of his ways and was received back into the Greek Church. When later the hour of "emancipation" struck for Bulgaria, Zankoff was already an old man, to whom his grey hairs imparted a certain air of respectability. He twice became Minister, and thus obtained an opportunity of demonstrating in the brightest colours his absolute incapacity. In politics as in religion he wore all colours, and has appeared as both the friend and the foe of Russia. His own friends could no longer deny that their chief was afflicted to a pitiful degree with *marasmus senilis*, and except as a "flag" could be of no further use. Secretaries were in fact told off to him in the persons of Lutzkanoff, Sarassoff, Milaroff, and others, whose duty it was to think and to act for Zankoff. He still, in spite of all his grey hairs, preserved sufficient of his earlier character to seize with

joy on every opportunity afforded him of committing an infamy. Whether the old man had actually been initiated into the plot *before* its execution appears questionable. No sooner though had the military conspiracy succeeded in placing the Prince in confinement, than Zankoff delayed no longer to enter it and, if rather in form than deed, to place himself at the head of the rebels, and thus to cover the closing years of his life with shame and ignominy.

CHAPTER VII.

AFTER THE REVOLUTION.

Unfavourable reception of the Revolution in the Country—Rumours of risings in the Provinces—The Clement-Grueff Government recognises the position as untenable—Popoff marches into Sofia with the Alexander Regiment—The Karaveloff-Stambuloff-Nikiforoff Regency—Political—Negotiations with the rebels—They withdraw to Bresnik.

The intelligence of the "abdication" of the Prince produced throughout the entire country a feeling akin to absolute stupefaction. The first surprise was so paralysing as to prevent for the moment any counter-movement. The mind of the mass of the people moves but slowly, and only with difficulty arouses itself to decided action. Those too, who could have given the necessary impulse, wavered at first on account of their inability to grasp what had actually occurred. *All* accounts however agree, that immediately the first fraudulent despatches from Sofia became known, a feeling of intense dissatisfaction was universally evident, the temper generally being that of the greatest dejection. The Russophiles said that they had delivered the country from Prince Alexander, but nowhere was this deliverance hailed with any manifestation of joy, and from the very first day no doubt could be entertained, that what had taken place in Sofia was in no way in conformity with the wishes of the people. During Saturday and Sunday all the world was still under the impression, that events had occurred in Bulgaria, which had burst over the country with the fury of a storm, and to struggle against

which was hopeless. That this was by no means the case, and that in reality the conspiracy consisted solely of a few traitors and the revolt of a regiment that had been inveigled into it under false pretences, became apparent in the first instance at Sofia, but was soon bruited abroad. What chiefly contributed to this was, that the persons, who had been fraudulently named as members of the band of conspirators, raised their voices in energetic protest against the supposed partnership, thus rending the veil, behind which the small and insignificant party of Zankoffists had attempted to hide themselves.

The first to come to the front was Karaveloff. On the morning of the 21st August he received a written communication to the effect, that he had been named a member of the Provisional Government, and was requested to take part in a sitting of the same, which was to take place at 10 a.m. Karaveloff took no notice whatever of the letter. Afterwards he was required to attend at a second meeting, which took place at 10 p.m. This time he obeyed, the order confining him to his house being dispensed with for the purpose. Of what actually took place there I received most precise accounts, emanating from a person actually present at the meeting, a person whom I believe to be a most honourable man and who cannot be suspected of a desire to favour Karaveloff, as he happened to be a determined enemy of his. According to my authority the sitting was tempestuous in the extreme, Karaveloff especially attacking the conspirators with passionate violence, more particularly the miserable Bishop Clement. With the words, "*You have destroyed for ever the freedom of Bulgaria,*" he left the

room. Thus then on the 21st August the Government was formed without him, and as all had gone smoothly so far, the Zankoffists considered that they might now venture to come forward with a Ministry formed exclusively from their own party, from the list of which the earlier fictitious names were omitted. The publishing of this list was the signal for the revolt of the provinces against the Provisional Government.

Before however following the movement in the provinces, it will be necessary to describe in detail the development of the military situation in Sofia. Early on the 21st August Major Popoff had been arrested, and the only battalion of the Alexander Regiment, present in Sofia, disarmed. On the same day this battalion took the oath of fidelity to the Provisional Government, whereupon its arms were restored. The two battalions of this regiment that were at Slivnitza received telegraphic orders to take the oath of allegiance to the new Government, which in the confusion of the first moment they gave into. On Sunday, the 22nd August, Major Popoff, who had, as stated above, been arrested, succeeded in speaking secretly with an officer, whom he sent to Slivnitza with the instructions:—"to allow the two battalions there to swear as many oaths as might be asked, but to return immediately to the camp of the Alexander Regiment at Sofia." This order of Popoff's was carried out, and on Monday, the 23rd August, the battalions set out for Sofia, one of the Battalion-Commanders, who had opposed their departure, being placed in arrest. Popoff had calculated that the battalions would reach Sofia early on the 24th. He now agreed to take the required oath of fidelity to the Provisional Government, on which,

being released, he threw himself on his horse and rode off to the regimental camp. There the guard at first opposed his entrance, but the authority of the former Commandant of the Regiment prevailed over the recent orders, and half-an-hour later Popoff entered Sofia at the head of his regiment. As is customary in all Bulgarian revolts, his first thought was to seize the telegraph, which he did with almost incredible rapidity; "for he who holds the telegraph, holds the country." He then speedily got possession of the town, and betaking himself to Bishop Clement, curtly informed him that he must then and there lay down the government.

In the mean time, the general situation had already undergone a change, to an extent of which Popoff, who had until to-day been kept in confinement, could have had no notion. Not only had the Prince's party in Sofia regained consciousness, but in a much greater degree both the provinces and the army. As early as the 22nd August it had been whispered in Sofia that the provincial regiments had declared for the Prince, and on the 23rd August these rumours assumed a more distinct shape. Towards evening, the rather disquieting intelligence reached the Provisional Government, that Zankoff and his counsellor, Bogdanoff, could no longer disguise from themselves the fact that the entire army had declared against them. They began to feel themselves in the position of prisoners, for not only had they lost control over the country, but they were in addition cut off from all communication with the outside world, as the telegraph lines to Widdin, Plevna, Tirnova, and Philippopolis, were all in the hands of the loyal troops, who threatened to shut the rebels up in Sofia. They could not even

depend on the troops that had mutinied, now that the truth had once come out; in a word, it was evident that the Provisional Government was lost, and that its overthrow was now merely a question of days, perhaps hours.

Under these circumstances the Russian Agent, Bogdanoff, sent to Karaveloff and requested him to come to the Russian Consulate. Karaveloff sent back word that Bogdanoff might, if he liked, come to him (Karaveloff) at his house, which Bogdanoff, on this, did. The Russian agent pressed Karaveloff in the most forcible terms to take over the government, which measure, the following day, Karaveloff decided to adopt. To understand these peculiar negotiations between Karaveloff and Bogdanoff, we must bear in mind the following considerations: Bogdanoff was fully persuaded that Prince Alexander, who was at present still a prisoner, would never return to Bulgaria, in which case, the grand object was attained. With Karaveloff it would be easy to reckon later, while at this juncture his co-operation might have the most beneficial results in preventing a civil war, a contingency of which, at that time, Bogdanoff appeared by no means desirous, preferring rather that Bulgaria should, later on, without any display on the part of Russia of military force, fall into her mouth like a ripe cherry. Karaveloff accordingly decided once more to assume the reins of government, and on the 24th August the Karaveloff-Nikiforoff-Stambuloff Regency, was sprung on Europe with a Ministry comprising Major Panoff as War Minister, and Stoiloff as Minister for Foreign Affairs. The whole of the members of the Provisional Government were obliged to resign, and the administration had in every way the appearance of a Government formed under the auspices of Prince Alexander himself.

The formal resignation of the late Government was carried out in a somewhat remarkable manner, the Ministry placing their resignations in the hands of "the Commander-in-Chief of the Bulgarian army," Major Grueff, with the following note:—

"When you, in consequence of the abdication of Prince Alexander Battenberg, required us to assume the civil administration of the country, we felt we could not but assent to the proposal made to us by you in the name of the Fatherland, and of the interests of order and peace; accordingly we accepted the posts, which you had conferred upon us. Now, however, that you have informed us of the necessity that exists for our resigning these offices, once more for the good of the Fatherland we readily submit, and herewith give in our resignations."

Grueff on his side also in the following letter to Karaveloff resigned the post of Commander-in-Chief which he had usurped:—"I have the honour to hand you herewith my resignation as Commander-in-Chief of the Army." In this mode was the rebel Government got rid of, and one would have expected, that the new Administration would forthwith have proceeded, as was their duty, to take the most energetic measures against the rebels, and to have inscribed the Prince's name on their colours as decidedly as had been done by the provinces. That this was not the case; that a proclamation of Karaveloff's on the one hand, and a circular note from Stoiloff to the Powers on the other, did not once mention the name of Prince Alexander, cannot but give rise to the gravest conjectures, and justify the various suspicions, which in particular had been entertained regarding Karaveloff.

The proclamation of Karaveloff was as follows:—

“To the Bulgarian People !

In consideration of the events, which have recently occurred in our Fatherland, and which have plunged it into a most dangerous condition of uncertainty, I have assumed the administration for the purpose of establishing quiet and order, securing the public safety, and rescuing the country from the position of inextricable embarrassment, into which it has been forced. To carry out this I count on the aid and good faith of the people. I herewith constitute under my presidency a Government, with the President of the National Assembly, Stambuloff, and Major Nikiforoff as members. I also inform the Bulgarian people that a Ministry has been formed of the following members: K. Stoiloff, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Public Worship; V. Radoslavoff, Minister of the Interior; T. Ivantshoff, Education; Geshoff, Finances; Oroshakoff, Justice; and Major Panoff, War. This Ministry will immediately take all necessary measures for ensuring forthwith the maintenance of quiet and order in the country.

Sofia, ^{12th}/_{24th} August, 1886.

KARAVELOFF.”

As a matter of fact the general impression was, that the new Government was simply carrying on, in a somewhat milder form, the work of the rebels, who had forcibly deposed the Prince. Neither Zankoff, Clement, nor even the military traitors had yet been arraigned; how was one then to help believing in, at least, a moral complicity on the part of the new Government, or at any rate some of its members?

The question how far the ramifications of the conspiracy extended, how many persons were cognisant of it, is exceedingly difficult to answer with any degree of certainty, and I quite allow, that I have not succeeded in arriving at any definite opinion as to the complicity of this or that personage. In the case in question, it is impossible to advance the omission of Prince Alexander's name as proof positive of guilt. On the contrary, it must be acknowledged that the Government could not well have acted otherwise than it actually did.

Circumstances had developed themselves in Sofia in so singular a manner that the Government found itself confronted with a two-fold task, to wit, the restoration, on the one hand, of the legislative Government of the Prince, and on the other, the prevention of an outbreak of civil war, and generally of any bloodshed. While carrying out the second portion of this task, the first had also to be kept in view. When, on the 24th August, Popoff marched into Sofia and demanded the resignation of the Provisional Government, the latter had already, as we have seen, determined on political grounds to resign, and thus, from a political point of view, the situation appeared fairly clear. The military question, however, wore a very different aspect, for here the power of the rebels was still unbroken. In Sofia, from the 24th, the following troops stood opposed to one another: on the Prince's side, Major Popoff with the Alexander Regiment and 1st Cavalry Regiment; on that of the rebels, Major Stoyanoff with the Struma Regiment and the 1st Artillery Regiment, which also had sided with him. The actual division of forces shewed, therefore, rather unfavourably for Popoff, who had absolutely no artillery at

his disposal, while on the other hand, it could with a fair amount of certainty be surmised, that very many officers and soldiers of the revolutionary regiments, who had obeyed the orders of the Commandants only under compulsion, or partial compulsion, would, on the first real encounter, go over to the other side. On account of these considerations Major Popoff determined to assume the offensive without delay. He was, however, prevented by an order from Karaveloff, who considered that it lay rather with him and the Ministry to deal with the rebels. This determination was dictated by the following considerations: Bogdanoff had again come to Karaveloff and declared that if any street fighting ensued in Sofia, *Russia would at once step in and occupy Bulgaria*. An attack by Popoff on the rebels would undoubtedly have resulted in a sanguinary struggle, but far greater even than this was the dread of a Russian occupation. It is, of course, in the highest degree improbable that Bogdanoff's threat would have been carried out, but at the time the Government could not know how matters really stood in this respect. The Bulgarians looked on a Russian occupation as the greatest and most terrible misfortune which could befall their country, and to escape which, every sacrifice ought to be made. But then they were confronted with the danger, that as soon as it should become unmistakeably evident that the Government was acting in all respects as if under the Prince, while it treated Stoyanoff's troops as rebels, the rebels might on their side take the offensive. If bloodshed was to be avoided it became necessary to parley with Stoyanoff, and under the prevailing conditions, this could only take place with any chance of success provided the Govern-

ment appeared more in the light of successors to the Clement-Grueff Government than as the Government of the Prince. The assumption of such a position was rendered all the easier from the fact, that they were in darkness in Sofia as to the fate of the Prince. Viewed from the simple standpoint of the soldier, what took place is of course quite unjustifiable; but when one considers that the Government had most important political interests to provide for, their action in the matter can hardly be condemned. In the actual position of affairs Popoff held possession of one portion of the town, the rebels of the other. Accordingly, if it was desired to avoid a collision, negotiations must be opened with the rebels, who used every evening to march out to the heights lying to the east of the town, whence their guns were well within range. Karaveloff's Co-Regent, Major Nikiforoff, and the War Minister, Major Panoff, conducted the negotiations, which resulted in both the royal and the rebel troops being withdrawn from the town, Popoff however maintaining the right to place guards there. In this way one object at least was gained—a conflict, and with it a Russian occupation, was avoided. The position however was destined to become still worse. The rebels having heard that Mutkuroff was on the march from Philippopolis, threatened to destroy Sofia with their guns, a threat which they were certainly in a position to accomplish. Fresh negotiations took place, their result being that 80,000 *francs* were paid to the rebels as *arrears of pay*, by which means they were induced to leave Sofia and withdraw to Pernik-Bresnik, which they did with bands playing. This departure of the Struma Regiment and the Artillery took

place on the 27th August, the previous two days having been passed in continuous negotiations between the two camps. The Artillery took with them twenty-four of the new Krupp guns, while they rendered the remaining twenty-four pieces unserviceable by carrying away the vent-pieces. Not until the rebels had actually withdrawn from Sofia were the Government free to act as their own masters, and openly to avow themselves to be what they wished—Prince Alexander's Government.

The officers Grueff, Bendereff, and Dimitrieff had already deemed it advisable to make themselves scarce, their intention being to seek safety across the frontier. They had not the courage to see it out to the bitter end with Stoyanoff and his rebels.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE RISING OF THE PROVINCES.

Captain Veltscheff raises the Standard in Philippopolis—Lieutenant-Colonel Mutkuroff assumes the command—The Rhodope and Balkan Regiments join—Telegraphic negotiations—Messages to Tirnova—Proclamation by Stambuloff—Stambuloff and Mutkuroff request the Prince to return to Bulgaria—Lieutenant-Colonel Lubomski and Major Usunoff in Widdin declare for the Prince—Other Regiments follow.

No sooner was the shameful manner, in which Clement, Zankoff and Grueff had deceived the country, understood in the provinces, than the counter-movement advanced with surprising rapidity. That it should break out almost simultaneously in the most various localities, is the strongest proof that it was no "got up" affair, but the expression asserting itself of the will of the entire country, and which found resolute leaders in the army. In which places, and by which officers the oath of fidelity to the Provisional Government was from the very first refused, has been already stated, and it merely remains to shew now in what way the standard was raised for the Prince at the various spots, where at first the people had submitted.

Let us first of all consider the events in Philippopolis. There the news of the deposition of Prince Alexander had caused the deepest dejection amongst both officers and men, while the coupling together of the names of Karaveloff and Zankoff excited distrust. Nevertheless the oath of fidelity to the Provisional Government was taken by the troops, with the single exception of a

družina* of the Philippopolis Regiment commanded by Captain Veltscheff. This officer, mistrusting the whole business, managed by constant delays to avoid altogether taking the oath. On the new ministerial list being published without Karaveloff's name, Veltscheff's suspicions were confirmed, and he had a conversation on the subject with Lieutenant-Colonel Mutkuroff, who commanded the Philippopolis Brigade. Mutkuroff was also of opinion that the army would not patiently submit to the deposition of the Prince, but he determined to act very cautiously, and commissioned Veltscheff to learn the views of the officers. Veltscheff soon convinced himself that the officers of the Philippopolis Regiment were prepared to stand by the Prince, a certain scene, of which he was witness, rendering him confident that the blow might be successfully struck. A picture dealer happened to enter a café, which was frequented by officers, and in a loud voice offered for sale the portrait of "the Regent Zankoff, the great Patriot." The officers present immediately "went for" him and kicked him out into the street. Veltscheff on this repaired to the barracks of his battalion and entered into conversation with his men. I give here the conversation with a few soldiers in the simple *naïve* form in which it was recounted to me. "Are you really pleased that Prince Alexander is no longer in Bulgaria? "No, I am certainly not pleased." "Then you would like to have him back?" "Yes, if it were only possible." "And why do you want him back?" "Because he is a very good man;"—"Because he fought along with us at Slivnitsa," said another, who meanwhile had come up; and all spoke in the same

* *i.e.*, the Militia and Irregular equivalent to a Company.--*Trans.*

sense. Veltscheff could not hide his emotion, and tears started to his eyes. The men at once perceived what it all meant, and a loud, unanimous shout of "Hurrah for Prince Alexander of Battenberg" shook the barrack walls. "Quiet," cried Veltscheff, "I see you understand me; but it is not yet time; be silent and wait." He hurried off to Mutkuroff; "My battalion is ready to march for the Prince!" All arrangements were immediately made, and a few civilians admitted to the secret, who were asked to assemble with their friends quietly, so as not to attract attention, at the Konak* that evening at 8 o'clock. At 7 o'clock Veltscheff, under the pretence of administering the oath of allegiance to the new Government, summoned his battalion together. It was necessary to proceed with great caution, as they were not yet certain of the rest of the troops. The battalion, accompanied by the regimental band, marched quietly towards the Konak, at which place the telegraph office was situated. The instant the civilians, assembled there, saw the battalion approaching, a loud hurrah resounded from their ranks, and the Konak and telegraph office were at once taken possession of. Veltscheff delivered a short speech; "Brothers, you have all followed me for the purpose of redeeming the honour of Bulgaria, disgraced by a band of conspirators! The Prince or death! Long live Prince Alexander of Battenberg!" A thundering hurrah followed; the ammunition chests which had in the meantime been brought out of the arsenal, were emptied; and the battalion marched towards the city to the strains of the national hymn, the *Djumi Maritza*.

* The former residence of the Turkish Viceroy.—*Trans.*

By the time that the battalion left the courtyard of the Konak a very considerable crowd had assembled there, and if up till then it had been a question of acting with the greatest secrecy, now however overt action of the most energetic description was required; enemies had to be overawed, while to friends a signal for insurrection had to be given in no uncertain tone. Accordingly Veltscheff caused the battalions to be halted in the garden of the Konak, and to fire three battalion volleys in the air. The mob rushed in terror in all directions, the regimental band again struck up, and the march was resumed in the direction of the residence of the Austrian Consul-General, who at the time was also acting for the German Empire. Veltscheff sent a message to the Consul-General, requesting him to come out, but instead the dragoman appeared and said that the Consul was sick, could not come, and had desired him to ask who it was that asked to see him, and what was their business. "It is the friends of Prince Alexander," replied Veltscheff, "and I beg the Consul to come out for one moment. I have only two words to say to him." The Consul came out into the street, and Veltscheff declared to him that the Bulgarian Army would obey only its old Prince, that it was ready to die for him, and begged the Consul to inform the Powers. They then proceeded through the streets to where the English Consulate was situated, and made a similar statement. Meantime the crowd had swelled to enormous dimensions, and exultingly pressed round the battalion. The pressure was so great that the march could only with difficulty be continued. Veltscheff now addressed the crowd, and requested those present to go into the town, and to arrest any enemies of the

Prince that they could get hold of, and so render them inoffensive. If anyone was killed however, his murderer would be shot without hesitation. The crowd replied with loud cheers for Prince Alexander, and then rapidly made for the town, where the directions received were zealously carried out. Several Russophiles are said to have received sound drubbings, but not a single man was killed.

Veltscheff's intention now was to encamp the larger portion of his battalion in a commanding position outside the town, while he occupied a few important points in the city with a company. For this purpose he had to pass the Russian Consulate, and as he was afraid of the troops making a hostile demonstration, he gave orders for the band to cease, and that the march past the Consulate should be without noise. His intentions were of the best, but the excitement of his men was too strong. In front of the Russian Consulate a soldier darted from the ranks, and, leaping with a bound up the steps, cried in ringing accents, "*Dolu, dolu, dolu** the Russians abroad and the Russians in Bulgaria!" There was no holding them longer; the troops broke into loud maledictions, the regimental band struck up the National Hymn, and the fierce shouts of "*dolu*," which on the 21st August had resounded through the Prince's palace in Sofia, now fell on the terrified ears of the Russian Consul.

This latter personage may well have said to himself, that there was here a bad business in progress, which very possibly might destroy the fine work of the 21st August. Apparently he believed that this counter-

* *i.e.*, down with the Russians.

revolution could be appeased by the same means as those by which the revolution itself had been called into existence, for the dragoman belonging to the Consulate shortly afterwards appeared and requested Veltscheff to come to the Consulate, "where," he said, "the Consul has a communication from His Majesty the Emperor to make to you; you had better come, it will be to your advantage." How great must have been the surprise of the Consul when, after the easy successes that had so far attended matters, he received the answer, which Veltscheff with proper pride gave to the dragoman,—that there was nothing he wanted at the Russian Consulate, that he asked for neither advantages nor disadvantages, and all he had to beg of the dragoman was to be good enough to leave him in peace. There were still honest folk in Bulgaria, who were not to be bought with gold, aye and plenty of them; at any rate more than was quite to the Russian taste!

As soon as the battalion had taken up a favourable position, Veltscheff rode to the telegraph office, where he met Lieutenant-Colonel Mutkuroff. Up to this point telegraphic communication had been interrupted. The moment communication was re-opened, the following despatch arrived from Sofia:—"Captain Dimitrieff is at the instrument and wishes to speak with Lieutenant-Colonel Mutkuroff. Let him be so good as to come to the instrument too." Mutkuroff replied that by chance he happened to be at the moment on the spot, and could begin a conversation. On this the following message came from Dimitrieff:—"The Varna garrison has refused to recognise the Provisional Government. Take immediate steps to send troops to Varna to chastise the

rebels." Nothing could have been better than this intelligence, for it gave the much wished for assurance, that they were not alone, that other troops had also declared for the Prince. This gratification was reflected in the reply, conceived in a spirit worthy of the Delphic Oracle, "Rely entirely on us; the Philippopolis Regiment will march without delay against the rebels."

All however was not yet plain sailing, for beyond Veltscheff's battalion, only the garrison at Varna had so far been made sure of. The telegraph was accordingly again put in motion, this time towards Haskioi, and the Commandant of the Rhodope Regiment, Captain Nikiforoff, summoned to the wire. On this officer's appearance, the situation was in a few words laid before him, and his co-operation requested. Nikiforoff (not to be confounded with the War Minister of the same name) replied, that he personally was ready to join the movement, but that he must speak with the officers of his regiment before giving an answer, as some of them were not quite trustworthy nor entirely loyal. Almost an hour was passed by the two officers in feverish expectation—would Nikiforoff refuse? would the Philippopolis and Varna risings remain isolated? would the venture of the officers, loyal to the Prince, cost them their heads? But see, the instrument begins to tick once more! what is the purport of those dots and dashes in pale blue ink, which the two officers are deciphering with such trembling eagerness? "The Rhodope Regiment has declared for the Prince! We stand at your disposal." A fresh telegram was at once despatched to Eski-Zagra to the Commandant of the Balkan Regiment, Captain Petreff. Neither Mutkuroff nor Veltscheff knew Petreff at all

intimately, and accordingly they proceeded cautiously, the conversation at first being rather on the general situation. When at length Petreff's replies seemed to indicate that he shared their sentiments, they began to use less precaution and openly demanded his adhesion. To this message however came *no answer*! The question was repeated, but failed again to elicit any reply. Had they then after all been deceived in Petreff? But no, the telegraph begins once more to work and another long message is run off. Petreff speaks about the honour of officers, the sanctity of an oath, the love of one's country—what can he be driving at? At length the conclusion to this treatise comes; it runs—"Why did you not at once say what you wanted? I and the Balkan Regiment are at your disposal. Long live Prince Alexander!"

So far, two fresh regiments had thus been won over to the Prince's cause. The third attempt was not, however, to be quite so favourable. In this case Major Gutscheff, commanding the Slivno Brigade, replied to the telegram, which was sent to him, with the single word "*merci*." A second telegram was sent, but again failed to extract any other answer than "*merci*" from Gutscheff. When it became evident that, under the prevailing circumstances, nothing more than this utterly unmeaning word was to be obtained, it was decided to go to work in a different mode. A telegram was despatched to a confidential agent at Jamboli, informing him of the position of affairs, and requesting him to proceed to Slivno with all speed, and induce the officers of the Slivno Regiment, who were in garrison, to arrest Gutscheff and the Commandant of the Regiment, Captain

Dukeff, and themselves to join the movement in the Prince's favour. It may be stated at once that this plan was completely successful. Naturally, however, Mutkuroff was unable to wait for the result of his agent's journey from Jamboli. As it was, without the Slivno, he already had at his disposal the Balkan and Rhodope Regiments, and a Battalion of the Philippopolis. In addition, he was certain that the remaining portion of the garrison of Philippopolis, viz.: two battalions of the Philippopolis Regiment, a regiment of cavalry, and a regiment of artillery would join him. He knew also that the Varna garrison was on his side, and he accordingly, forestalling somewhat the result, telegraphed to Tirnova to Stambuloff, the President of the Chamber, that the whole of the East-Rumelian garrisons had refused to recognise the Provisional Government, and had placed themselves under his orders. After a brief exchange of telegrams Stambuloff declared himself ready to head the movement, his first act of government being the promulgation of the following manifesto:—

“PROCLAMATION.

In the name of Prince Alexander I. of Bulgaria, and in the name of the National Assembly, I declare the Provisional Government of Sofia, under the Presidency of Clement, to be illegal and opposed to the laws of Bulgaria. Any one obeying the orders of this Government will be tried and punished according to military law. I appoint Lieutenant Colonel Mutkuroff, Commandant of Brigade, to be Commander-in-Chief of the whole of the Bulgarian military forces, and I command all the civil and military authorities

of the country to submit to his orders. I call on the heroism of the Bulgarian People to defend the Throne and Fatherland against the traitors, who have attempted to depose our heroic and beloved Prince. May the Almighty grant us strength, wherewith the Nation may defend its honour and rights, and the reputation of the Fatherland and of our Prince, chosen by the People. Long live Bulgaria! Long live Prince Alexander of Bulgaria!

The President of the National Assembly,
STAMBULOFF."

The fact of Stambuloff declaring for the Prince meant of itself that Tirnova with its garrison was to a certain extent won over too, for Stambuloff possessed almost unlimited influence in his paternal town. As in addition to this, he had in this case taken his decision in favour of an essentially popular cause, Tirnova could not fail from this moment to become the centre of action of the Prince's party. It was here that, up to the moment that Sofia regained her rights, converged all threads, and from here that Europe first gained the information that the Bulgarian Army was not the degenerate band, which, on the first news of the outbreak and reception of the revolution, it had almost everywhere been held to be.

Immediately after Mutkuroff in Philippopolis and Stambuloff in Tirnova, the Commandant of Brigade, Lieutenant-Colonel Lubomski, had risen at Widdin, and had gone so far as to inform the Provisional Government in Sofia of his determination in the following message:—

"From the Military Authorities in Widdin to the Provisional Government of the Revolutionary

Committee in Sofia, Major Grueff, Nikiforoff, and Metropolitan Clement.

"The Widdin Regiment, the Pioneer Battalion, the Second Battalion of the Plevna Regiment, as also the Fortress Artillery took an oath faithfully and loyally to serve the Provisional Government. We believed when we promised our support to those who were acting, or were pretending to act in the name of the Bulgarian Nation, that we were fulfilling a sacred duty towards the Fatherland. Shortly afterwards, having seen and satisfied ourselves that the Government, which had been set up, was not a national one but a Revolutionary Government, and that Tirnova had declared against it, we arrived at the knowledge that we had been deceived and tricked. Led astray solely by the deception practised on us, we supported the pretended national cause, and held ourselves, all and each in particular, solemnly bound thereto, but only so long as the darkness remained unilluminated, which hung over the events of the revolution. Now we shall do this no longer, and we accordingly remain the devoted servants of our true Government, and in no case will we concede that we, and the National Army in general, are at the disposal of a Revolutionary Government. Accordingly we solemnly declare the oath taken yesterday to be no longer binding on anyone. We consider ourselves as freed from all obligations to the government, and shall begin to act for ourselves, and shall hold by those persons, of whom we are satisfied that they will remain at the head of a truly National Government. Publish this our declaration, so that the army may be

absolved of the shame of having identified itself with the revolution.

The Commandant of the fortress of Widdin and
the 2nd Brigade,

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL LUBOMSKI.

The Second Commandant and Commander
of the Pioneer Battalion,

MAJOR USUNOFF.

The Commandant of the Widdin Regiment,

CAPTAIN BELINOFF."

This was the "bad news" which on the evening of the 23rd August induced, or rather compelled, the Revolutionary Government to retire, and leave the field free to the Karaveloff-Stambuloff-Nikiforoff Regency. Before however this Regency was formally installed on the 24th, Stambuloff and Mutkuroff had already despatched a telegram to Prince Alexander, requesting him to return to his country. As however it was not known in Tirnova where at the moment Prince Alexander actually was, the telegram was sent to Prince Alexander of Hesse at Jugenheim, with a request to transmit it to the Prince. The telegram ran as follows:—

"Highness!

The People and the Army await with impatience the moment when your Highness will condescend to return to your home, Bulgaria, and take in hand the settlement of affairs. Therefore we most humbly beg of your Highness to deign to return to Bulgaria, and thereby as speedily as possible to gratify and tranquilize your faithful loving people and your brave army, who are willing to lay down their lives and sacrifice their goods and property for your

Highness. With the early arrival of your Highness in Bulgaria will peace and order, which have been so insolently and madly disturbed by agitators and traitors, be established according to law. Long live Prince Alexander of Bulgaria!

The President of the National Assembly,

STAMBULOFF.

The Commander-in-Chief of the Army,

MUTKUROFF."

Thus at the first step the loyal movement, which we have been, quite wrongly, accustomed to call the counter-revolution, had brought the whole of East-Rumelia under the rule of the legitimate government. North-Bulgaria also had for the most part seceded from the revolutionary one-day government, the rebels at Sofia alone remaining under arms. The Shumla garrison too continued a few days irresolute, but on the other hand the Slivno and Rustchuk Regiments twenty-four hours later gave in their adhesion to the legitimate government. Stambuloff's manifesto to the people, and his and Mutkuroff's telegram to the Prince, marked the rising as emphatically in favour of the Prince, and if at first in Sofia some hesitation was apparent on account of the presence of the rebels, yet, as soon as they had withdrawn, the mask was completely dropped. In Sofia too great weakness no doubt was shewn in allowing open traitors like Clement and Zankoff to go scot-free, while in the provinces everyone was unhesitatingly arrested, who had joined the revolution, or who did not prove himself sufficiently amenable to the counter-movement.

The impression produced in the provinces by Stambuloff's manifesto was widely different from that which,

on their side, the proclamations of the Revolutionary Government called forth. If at the best what had happened had produced a deep feeling of dissatisfaction and sorrow, now, however, throughout the country broke forth loud exultations. It was as if, with the removal of the Revolutionary Government, the nation had also been freed from some horrible nightmare. From all directions telegrams kept pouring in with reports of national demonstrations, and good wishes to Stambuloff in his efforts. The national joy, however, found its loudest expression in the army, while within that body itself, the excitement and enthusiasm reached its zenith amongst the East-Rumelian Regiments, who impetuously demanded to be led against the rebels at Sofia, in order then and there to wipe out in blood the ignominy which had been brought on the Bulgarian Army.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PRINCE'S RETURN.

Prince Alexander hears in Lemberg that the Bulgarian Army has risen in his favour—Decides to return to Bulgaria—The return journey through Austria and Rumania becomes a triumphal progress—Enthusiastic reception in Bulgaria—*Viâ* Rustchuk, Sistova, Tirnova to Philippopolis—Outrage on the railway at Tirnova-Semenli—State entry into Sofia.

We left the Prince at the moment when, crossing the Russo-Austrian frontier, he was received at the Austrian frontier station with loud manifestations of sympathy. Thence the Prince continued his journey without stopping to Lemberg, whither, as he had learnt at the frontier, all letters, etc., addressed to him, had been forwarded. At every station preparations had been made for his reception. At Lemberg indeed, where he arrived at 2-30 p.m. on the 27th August, the reception was of the warmest description. At the railway station itself he was enthusiastically greeted by a large number of gentlemen, who were allowed on to the platform by special cards of admission, which had been sold for the purpose. Here he was also welcomed by Baron von Riedesel, the Comptroller of his Household, who had been on leave in Germany at the time of the outbreak of the rebellion, and now had travelled *viâ* Bucharest to meet the Prince. The road to the hotel was filled with a tightly-packed crowd, while in the Prince's immediate vicinity an apple could hardly have reached the ground. It must have been with curious sensations that the Prince, so shamefully expelled from his own country, suddenly saw himself

welcomed with such tokens of regard and affection by strangers, to whom he had never had an opportunity of rendering the smallest benefit. What a difference was there between this place and that country, to which through long years he had devoted his life, and which he had raised to a position of respect and military renown, only to receive such a shameful recompense! Something of this kind must have of necessity been in the Prince's thoughts, for he was still in ignorance of what had occurred in Bulgaria subsequently to his departure, as between the Russian frontier and Lemberg merely indistinct rumours of the counter-movement had reached his ears.

The Prince arrived in Lemberg worn out in body and deeply dejected in spirit. Not until he reached the hotel did he learn from Herr von Riedesel, that the whole of Bulgaria had risen in his favour, and that Stambuloff was at the head of the Government, and requested the Prince to return at once. The whole affair must indeed have appeared to the Prince like a dream, for when in real life do we see such rapid transformations? In truth this was not the first time in his life that Prince Alexander had experienced equally rapid mutations, and, it would seem as if the wheel of events, which one moment brings the highest down to the bottom and the next raises him to the top once more, had specially sought him out. How often had he not already been "down," and still had ever risen victorious again to the surface! Never deeper had the wheel of fate hurled him than when, deprived of his liberty by his own rebellious soldiers, he had been driven forth from his country; and yet it seemed to be desirous of raising him up once more to the most dazzling splendour.

According to the messages, which he received in Lemberg, there was no longer room to doubt, that the revolution in Sofia had been completely shattered, but it is quite explicable that the Prince, after all he had gone through, should at first have been disinclined to credit the reaction, and that he would require the most undeniable proofs to convince him. With what satisfaction the Prince learnt the events in Bulgaria, needs no telling.

Now, however, the great question forced itself on the Prince, "what was to be done?" To answer this question required the deepest consideration, as also the receipt of further news. Hence it was that no final decision was arrived at the first day.

In the evening the popular demonstrations were renewed; it was even attempted to organise a torch-light procession, (which was, however, stopped by the police,) and the Prince finally found himself compelled to deliver a short speech from the balcony of the hotel, in which, in heartfelt words, he thanked them for their expressions of sympathy, which, after the sufferings that he had endured the last few days, touched him as doubly kind. This was all that the Prince said, and indeed, he could have said little less to the people who had received him so favourably. In spite of this fact, I have read somewhere that the Prince did not "let slip the opportunity of getting up a Polish demonstration." It only remains to add to this that Prince Alexander instigated the revolution in Sofia himself, solely to be able to come like this to Lemberg, and "get up a Polish demonstration there!"

It was, however, by no means merely Poles who shewed their sympathy for Prince Alexander, but repre-

sentatives of every nationality. It was only requisite to look at the mountains of letters and visiting cards to learn that not only had every class of society, but such diverse nationalities as Germans, Poles, and Hungarians, had acted together with unaccustomed unanimity. If ever telegraph clerks earned their bread in the sweat of their brows, those of Lemberg did so during these days. By hundreds on hundreds, from all parts of Europe, came telegrams, the senders of which offered the Prince their congratulations on his deliverance. Many thought they ought not to withhold from the Prince their well-intentioned advice, in which a singular unanimity was expressed. "Go back, and have the conspirators hung; the more the better," was the key-note of every telegram. Bishop Clement had notably a large number of bitter foes, a fact which is easily conceivable. Nowhere is it written in the Gospel, as the radical deputy, Petkoff, afterwards remarked, that a man shall betray his Prince and ruin his Fatherland. That Germany held the foremost place, as the source from whence most of the telegrams originated, is to be explained by the great affection which the Prince enjoyed amongst all ranks, and it is quite comprehensible too, that among the German messages, very many should proceed from German officers. The German officer-corps has never yet ceased to treat Prince Alexander as belonging to the German army—in evil report as in good report!

Thus the first day in Lemberg, on which the Prince had intended to repose after the fatigue and exertions of the last week, what with its fresh intelligence and the thereby newly-created duties, brought him no rest, but only fresh agitation, which, if of a pleasanter nature,

was nevertheless still agitation. And yet how soundly did he sleep during this night, the first for six days on which he could lie down without the fear of having his throat cut before morning!

In the early morning of the 28th August, the Prince's eldest brother, Prince Louis of Battenberg, arrived in Lemberg, and very serious deliberations took place, as to whether the Prince should at once respond to the summons of the Bulgarians or not. That the position of the Prince after his return would still be an exceedingly difficult and thankless one, no doubt could prevail. On the other hand the Prince's personal reputation, and the maintenance of the monarchical principle, appeared to demand, that he should ignore the revolution, and return to Bulgaria, in order at least to restore law and order there. This was the first and most trenchant reason that seemed to call for the Prince's return. It may safely be assumed, that he had already in his mind's eye the possibility or probability, that his stay in Bulgaria would not be a long one, but whether or not he had yet formed any decided idea on the subject I cannot say. Be that as it may, by 9 o'clock he had determined to respond to the call of Stambuloff and the army, and a special train was immediately ordered to convey the Prince back to Giurgevo.

The news spread rapidly through Lemberg, that the Prince had decided on returning to Bulgaria, and the more this decision accorded with the general wish, the greater were the preparations which the population made to impart to his departure the ostentatious character of a state ceremony. The Austrian Government had apparently however become rather frightened at the ever

increasing demonstrations in favour of the Prince, and they feared perhaps that their repetition might lead to unpleasantness with Russia. To avoid this, the special train, which was destined for the Prince, was marshalled at an old goods station, and only at the last moment was he informed, that he would have to set out thence and not from the passenger station. Accordingly, while immense crowds were awaiting his arrival at the latter station, the prince was driving along by-streets to the goods station, everywhere however sympathetically greeted by a joyous if less numerous crowd. At 2 p.m. the train moved off, in which the Prince, accompanied by his brothers, Princes Louis and Joseph, and his Comptroller von Riedesel, was journeying towards his country. At all the more important stations through Galizia at which the train stopped, at Czernowitz, at Suczawa—everywhere a sumptuous reception, at which enormous crowds assisted. How would it have been at first, if the Prince had travelled through Hungary, where at this instant he is not only the most popular man but absolutely deified?

In Rumania a difference was so far observable that, while the popular demonstrations remained the same, the Government officials also took part officially in them. At Roman the Minister Sturdza welcomed the Prince officially in the name of the King, and at every garrison-town, through which the train passed, guards of honour were drawn up. Regarding the reception that the Prince met with in Rumania I will quote the following from the Bucharest correspondent of the Cologne Gazette:—

“At 9-40 a.m. on the 29th August, amid the hearty shouts of welcome of an enormous crowd, the train

steamed into the Northern station of the Rumanian capital, where the *élite* of Bucharest, without distinction of nationality or political party-creed, awaited the arrival of Prince Alexander with feelings somewhat akin to the passionate longing, with which the return of some beloved member of a family is looked for, who has been believed lost. Besides the English Ambassador, Sir W. White, the Bulgarian Diplomatic Agent in Bucharest, M. Nacevics, and many resident Bulgarians, the President of the Ministry, Joan Bratiano, the Ministers Stolojan, Nacu, Rado Mihai, General Greceano, the Prefect of Police, and numerous other magnates of the capital, many of them wearing Bulgarian decorations, were present on the platform. Bratiano in a short address bade the Prince, who, with his two brothers, was in plain clothes, welcome, and then the Prince, accompanied by his brothers, the Ministers, and those members of the *Corps Diplomatique* who were present, entered the royal waiting-room. Although Prince Alexander had expressed the desire to start at once in the direction of Rustchuk, still, although a special royal train had been placed at his disposal, some delay was unavoidable. Prince Alexander, whose imposing figure indeed the sleepless nights and the scanty food of the last few days had not succeeded in bending, though his countenance betrayed only too clearly the effects of the agitation and the mental suffering which he had undergone, was naturally most agreeably impressed with the sympathetic reception accorded him. As soon as the Prince had partaken of some breakfast, the train, which was to convey him to Giurgevo, moved off shortly before 11 o'clock amidst the cheers of the assembled thousands. At Giurgevo, (where on the

Smarda landing-stage he was received with military honours by a guard furnished from the Dorobantzes* of the 15th Regiment and the Kalarasches, who composed the garrison,) the Prince was conducted on to the "Alexander" yacht, which was awaiting him, gaily dressed out in full gala bunting. Under salutes from two Bulgarian war-ships, equally resplendent in bunting, which were anchored off Rustchuk, and the batteries mounted on the heights overlooking the town, shortly before 2 p.m. he reached the brilliantly be-flagged landing-bridge on the Rustchuk bank of the Danube.

On the banks rising terrace-like, tier by tier, above the river, along which stretched the queer medley of miserable-looking ill-paved streets, which formed the old Turkish town, only now commencing here and there to wear a European aspect, every spot that afforded a glimpse of the Danube, was covered with a densely-packed crowd. The variegated colours of the national costume of the peasantry, who on this occasion formed a more than ordinarily large proportion of the crowd, and amongst whom many Turks were noticeable, imparted such a mosaic-like aspect to the scene, that the Rustchuk bank of the Danube, which as a rule presents so dreary and deserted an aspect, wore a friendly, inviting, and picturesque appearance, which lost nothing in effect by its juxtaposition with the town and strand, both gaily decorated with flags. There were on board the Prince's yacht, in addition to those persons who had accompanied him from Lemberg, or

*Dorobantzes and Kalarasches in the Rumanian army, are species of Militia, Infantry and Cavalry respectively, who are called out for twelve trainings in the year.—*Trans.*

who had joined his suite at Bucharest, the Bulgarian deputation, which had been sent to greet the Prince at Bucharest, and also the members of the Prince's Regency and Government, who, with Stambuloff at their head, had hurried to Giurgevo to meet him. If the yacht's appearance was the signal for the outburst of tumultuous cheering, yet, as the stately form of the Prince became visible on the steps of the landing stage, the demonstrations swelled to one continuous storm of enthusiastic joy. With bared head and rapid, firm tread the Prince mounted the steps leading to the landing bridge, on which the Bishop of Rustchuk, the foreign Consuls, (including the Russian) in gala uniform, and the heads of the local departments, awaited the Prince returning to his land. Receiving with reverential respect the blessing of the bishop, Alexander embraced that ecclesiastical dignitary, and many an eye was moist as it was noticed how the grey-haired bishop allowed his hand to rest long on the head of the Prince bending before him. The Prince, who, clad in the same plain, unadorned garments, in which he had been carried away to a foreign country by a band of conspirators, now trod once again the soil of the land that owed him so much."

The first official address to the Prince was that, in which Stambuloff in a few brief but emotional accents, bade the returning sovereign welcome. Other speeches then followed, to which the Prince, who was evidently much moved, replied in heartfelt words. These words became however inaudible in the loud cheers, with which the surrounding crowd replied to the "cheer for Bulgaria," with which the Prince concluded his speech. Without

his being able to prevent it, the Prince was then and there lifted on to the shoulders of the officers and deputies standing by him and, with one long unbroken roar of cheers, was carried across the landing-square through the rather narrow and steep streets leading to the palace. Young and old, great and small, pressed on, if only to touch the clothes of the Prince, who, raised high over the heads of the exultant crowd, and the object of a perfect hail of flowers and wreaths, was carried in triumph to the palace. Prince Louis of Battenberg had already taken leave of his brother at Giurgevo and returned to Germany.

Here in the palace his labours forthwith commenced, for it was before all things necessary once more to bring the machinery of government into working order. After a consultation with Stambuloff and the other Ministers, a Ministry was formed composed of Radoslavoff, Nacevics, Stoiloff, Geshoff, and Ivantshoff, the principal political significance of which lay in the fact, that Karaveloff did *not* belong to it. The Prince had a long interview also with the Russian Consul at Rustchuk, which in its results was destined to prove of transcendent importance, and with which we shall have again to concern ourselves later on.

The Prince passed the nights of the 29th and 30th August in Rustchuk, but at 3 a.m. the journey to Sistova was resumed on board the "Alexander." In Sistova also a grand state reception took place, and a *Te Deum* was celebrated in the cathedral, at which the Prince assisted. As soon as the Prince had had breakfast, the carriage journey in-land was commenced, and everywhere, even in the most insignificant village, he had evidence afforded him of the joy that his return caused

his subjects. Especially warm was his reception at Tirnova, which he reached about 5 p.m. Tirnova has always passed politically for a somewhat unruly town, in which passions are more easily inflamed than elsewhere in Bulgaria, and has accordingly always held a disproportionately high position in the discussions of Bulgarian politicians. The town had enthusiastically joined Stambuloff's rising, and it was with no small satisfaction that Tirnova, which in the choice of a capital city had had to yield to Sofia, saw itself the seat, if only for the time-being, of the legitimate Government, at the head of which its renowned child, Stambuloff, stood. The reception at Tirnova was accordingly specially enthusiastic, and the ancient royal city exhibited a jubilant excitement, such as it perhaps had never before experienced. The manifestations of affection and loyalty which followed him in an unbroken series, did not fail to leave their impress on the Prince, and his frame of mind, which at the outset of his journey had been mournful and dejected, began to show signs of returning cheerfulness.

I cannot undertake to follow the Prince from town to town, and to describe the joyous demonstrations with which he was received at each separate halting place. These receptions, of necessity, presented everywhere a great similarity, and their constant repetition would be as wearying to the reader as it was fatiguing to the Prince. Suffice it then to say that the journey was performed by carriage from Tirnova, *viâ* Elena to Eski Zagra,* which was reached on the evening of the 1st September, the journey onward being continued by rail, at 9 p.m.

* Jeni Zagra?—*Trans.*

I could, indeed, have wished to have nothing special to chronicle regarding this nocturnal journey. Unhappily this is not the case, and to the shame of the Prince's enemies must it be told, that here, by means of a dastardly attempt at assassination, they once more tried to get rid of him. When the Emperor of Russia is about to make a journey through any part of Russia, entire regiments are called out for the purpose of posting sentries along the railway, and so preventing the approach of nihilists. Prior to the arrival of the Imperial train the rails, sleepers, and entire permanent way, are subjected to the most searching examinations, in order to ascertain whether criminal hands have made any arrangement for causing the train to leave the rails, have loosened the rails, or have laid mines. Here, in Bulgaria, such precautions have never been thought of, for the simple reason that here it was never imagined that the Sovereign could be exposed to such attacks. It was reserved for the men who do not call themselves nihilists, but "friends of the Emperor of Russia," and are so named also by the official representatives of Russia—it was reserved for them to transplant the mode of attack of the Russian nihilists to Bulgaria, and to attempt to bring about the derailment of the Prince's train at Tirnova-Semenli. But for the vigilance of the engine driver, who noticed the balk lying across the rails in time to stop the train, Prince Alexander would perhaps have experienced the fate with which his Imperial namesake sees himself ever threatened. Had they been gifted with ever so small a modicum of tact, this was just the one mode of attack that the "friends of the Emperor" would have studiously avoided. Of course it is asking a

great deal to expect any *tact* from hired assassins; and, when all is said and done, one base act, more or less, matters but little in this wretched history. Under other circumstances the criminal attempt on the railway at Tirnova-Semenli would have attracted the gaze of all Europe, and have called forth universal indignation; as it was, it was treated merely as a minor episode in the drama that was being played with such astonishing rapidity.

Having once more evaded, as above described, a criminal plot, the Prince reached Philippopolis on the morning of the 2nd September, where, as everywhere, preparations for a state entry had been made. Amidst the thunders of the saluting battery and the strains of the National Hymn, Prince Alexander quitted the train, and then could be really seen what truth there was in the fables circulated regarding his unpopularity in East-Rumelia; for as the Prince stood amongst the people, and greeted them with his kindly face, such a waving of hats on the part of the surging crowd ensued, that it seemed as if a beloved prince had returned again to his own.

On the 3rd September at 11 a.m. the Prince entered Sofia, where there was awaiting him an ovation at the least as enthusiastic as at his triumphal entry after the Servian war. Many had gone out a considerable distance to meet him, and offer him their greetings, before his entry into the city. Several kilometres before reaching Sofia the Prince had quitted the carriage, covered with flowers, in which with Stambuloff he had driven from Sarambey, he and his suite mounting the horses which had been brought out to meet him. Along with the

Prince rode Prince Francis Joseph, Lieutenant Colonel Mutkuroff, Majors Petreff and Popoff, von Riedesel, and the aides-de-camp. In front of the city were drawn up the troops—a battalion of the Alexander Regiment, eight Rumelian battalions, two batteries and two squadrons. As the Prince dashed towards the line of troops, he was greeted with a perfectly indescribable outburst of joy. The bands played, the cannon thundered, and the hurrahs of the troops seemed never to be coming to an end, when he addressed them briefly from the front, and thanked them for remaining true to him, and cleansing the Bulgarian Army, as far as was in their power, from the stain of treason.

Such a military welcome possesses peculiar and specific properties; it may be designated as a regular form of expression, when the thundering cheers, with which a general or ruler is saluted by his troops, are spoken of. It is indeed perfectly true, that in peace as in war, on the most solemn as on the most ordinary occasion, the soldier on parade has no other means, wherewith to give vent to his feelings, than the “hurrah,” which he habitually pours forth with all the force of his lungs. It will be said, that this “hurrah” can possess no great capacity for modulation, and that on one occasion it must sound exactly as on another. This is however a mistake, as anyone, who has had an opportunity of comparing the “hurrah” of discipline with the “hurrah” which comes from the heart, must know. I know not wherein lies the difference; it is more to be felt than described; but there is a “hurrah” which the hearer perceives at once to proceed from an inward joy and enthusiasm—and *this* “hurrah” we here heard!

On entering the city at the Chamber of Deputies an enormous crowd of people had collected, who welcomed the Prince with warm demonstrations of sincerest joy, and with shouts far other than those to which, ten days before, the mob, which had been driven together, had given vent before the Russian Consulate in honour of the Russian Emperor. The Consuls also of the various Powers had come to congratulate the Prince on his deliverance from the hands of the rebels and his return to his state. That the Russian Consul did not share in this demonstration, but remained silent in his house, unadorned with flags, is not difficult of comprehension. The return of the Prince seemed to destroy the revolutionary work of the Russian Representative, and M. Bogdanoff can hardly in truth be blamed for not caring to assist at the downfall of his hopes. Perhaps too he had said to himself, that his presence might act somewhat as a wet blanket on this joyous scene; why for once should a Russian Consul not be seized with a fit of tact? Nothing is impossible in this world! That the Representative of Germany was also absent was hard, very hard! and all were at a loss to comprehend why he in particular should assume this attitude, which, viewed by the side of the participation of the other Consuls, could not but appear as a wilful and studied slight.

In front of the palace the Prince held the march-past of his loyal troops, and then himself entered. Here all combined to remind him of what had taken place ten days before. Through this entrance it was that the rebels had forced their way in; through it they had led him as a prisoner to the War Office; and of a truth he little thought at that time, that he should again look on

this palace. The sight once more of this, the theatre of the revolution, must have been well-nigh overwhelming in its effects. How tremendous was the difference between the past and the present, separated from one another by but ten short days—and how dark was the outlook!

CHAPTER X.

THE FOREIGN VERDICT.

Prince Alexander and his "influence on the press"—Judgment passed on the action of Russia—The Bulgarians cruelly misunderstood—German public opinion, and the German Government—Close connection between Bulgarian affairs and the interior politics of Germany—Austria-Hungary—Part played by the Tzechs—Tardy recognition of the necessity of preserving the union of the small Danube States—England's weak policy—The Panslavists.

Prince Alexander has, amongst other things, been credited with being a master of the art of influencing public opinion, and invariably bringing it over to his views. For my part I cannot see that this necessarily implies culpability, for every statesman, no matter what his nationality or what his political bent, aims at the same object, often openly and confessedly, often in a more or less indirect manner. The only difference is that one man succeeds and another not. I might adduce the most convincing evidence, that what we are accustomed to term a "press-bureau" either does not exist at all in Bulgaria, or only in so primitive a form, as to excite the contemptuous pity of the whole civilised world. This is a fact, which every man, who has any acquaintance with Bulgarian affairs, knows, but to prove which would lead me too far a-field. On the other hand I may be allowed to assert, that during his confinement at least Prince Alexander could not possibly have brought any influence to bear on public opinion through the press. I imagine that this proposition will hardly be traversed; at the same time if its justice be allowed,

it must also be conceded, that the expression of public opinion at that time was that of a real, *bonâ-fide* public opinion, and not the manufactured product of Machiavellian state-craft.

Every one, who considers the matter at all dispassionately, will admit that Prince Alexander owed the warm, often enthusiastic, expressions of sympathy, with which public opinion everywhere greeted him, not to those secret arts that shun the light of day, but pre-eminently to the feelings of indignation which thrilled the public at the means which the "friends of Russia" had ventured to employ against a Prince, who in an unequal contest with a superior, reckless, and implacable foe, had given proofs of chivalry, of statesmanlike and political talents, which had won for him the sympathy of all Europe, with the sole exception of a few, albeit very powerful, enemies. There is no necessity to cast about for artificial reasons as to why the figure of the Prince is surrounded with a special halo for us Germans; why innumerable Germans, who had never known the Prince, spoke of him with real enthusiasm; for the smallest insight into the feeling and thoughts of the German people will sufficiently explain it. Concurrently with the accentuation among us of the feeling of nationality, and with the support and protection afforded to Germans abroad by the might of the Empire, has the German living in Germany extended a keener interest to his fellow countrymen residing in foreign lands. The deeds which, in the course of the last quarter of a century, we have accomplished, have taught us a feeling of pride in ourselves, and wherever a German, by noble conduct or glorious deeds, gains honour and renown, we

boast of it with pride, for he has contributed another stone to the edifice for which we have all, according to our several means, learnt to labour—*ad majorem Germanicæ gloriam*. Reason and education have formed of the German people the most peace-loving element of all Europe, in spite of which, however, the cruel pressure of the times have rendered us a military nation, whose heart, whether we ourselves be engaged in war or peace, beats high at the mention of warlike matters, even though the scene be far-off Turkey. Whether it be sentiment of nationality, or a remnant of the old free-booting blood, which still courses through our veins, certain it is that we are more susceptible to military glory than other nations. “*Das Herz von Preussen's Volk ist da, wo Preussen's Fahnen wehn**”—these words, addressed by the Progressist Ziegler, in 1866, to the Chamber of Deputies, are true to-day, not only of Prussia, but of Germany, and wherever the smallest shred of this standard shews itself, the sympathy of the German nation will not fail it. The overwhelming joy with which the news of the victories of the Bulgarians over the Servians in the previous year, was received in Germany, was due neither to any special affection towards the Bulgarians nor any particular dislike towards the Servians, but was the essential outcome of the circumstance, that the Bulgarian troops were led by a German Prince—by a German Prince, against whom the sole reproach that his foes could bring was *that he was a German*. The renown which that Prince won in that war, we, justly or unjustly, have claimed as in some sense our own; we are proud of the German, who in a foreign land has shed such lustre on the German name.

*The heart of Prussia's people is there, where Prussia's standards wave.

I have no intention whatever to treat the matter more tragically than is necessary. I know as well as any man, gifted with common sense, that the Prince of Bulgaria never could have pretended that Germany would stand by him under all circumstances, just as if in him the honour of the German flag was at stake. But public opinion, which had with him, and through him, shared the gratification at the Bulgarian victories, and which with pardonable national vanity had partly ascribed them to the German origin, the German education, the German military training of the Prince, felt itself also wounded in him; and hence it was, that the baseness of the means employed against him produced a far more acute impression on it, than on the public opinion of other countries, to whom the moral, or rather immoral, aspect of the case presented itself.

The first impression, which the outrage of the 21st August produced in Europe, was consistently uniform; everywhere the villainy was condemned in the sharpest terms, the severest expressions possible being applied to the traitors. That Russia's hand had directed the threads of the conspiracy; that she was to be treated as the real instigator; there existed from the very commencement not the smallest doubt. It was known, that Russia had for some time been working against the Prince with all the resources at her command of an unscrupulous policy; but that this autocratic military State should condescend so low, should be so completely false to the fundamental principles on which was based her own existence, as to incite a military conspiracy and to make common cause with rebel officers against their sovereign, this no one had believed. History teaches us, that down

even to the most recent times there have always been found Russian officers ready to raise their hand against their own Emperor, and it seems by no means improbable that the Emperor Alexander will one day lose his life at the hand of a Russian officer. Russian Emperors have before now caused officers, guilty of this description of high treason, to be dealt with according to their deserts, *i.e.* to be hung, and Alexander III. has himself signed such death-sentences. And rightly so too! But the one thing, that the understanding of an ordinary mortal will never be able to grasp, is, why an act which in Russia constitutes a capital crime, should in Bulgaria be a praiseworthy deed meriting support! A great deal is said, and unhappily with truth, about "subversive tendencies." It is difficult to imagine anything more "subversive" than the example set in high quarters.

There have been said, and indeed by all Europe, very hard things about the Mighty Ruler of the Empire of the Tzars; at the same time there is an international courtesy that prevents things, which are without hesitation thrown in the teeth of the small and weak, being said openly to the face of the great and powerful. Thus the indignation, which was sure to find voice, directed itself against the Bulgarians, who were accused of the blackest ingratitude towards the Prince, of incredible baseness. They had never been worthy of Prince Alexander; they well deserved to come under the Russian knout, and all the world would rejoice to see it vigorously applied to them! If "the Bulgarians" had in truth been the originators of the infamous *coup* of the 21st August, I should without hesitation have subscribed to these opinions. The sequel has however demonstrated,

that "the Bulgarians" have done all that lay in the power of men to recall their Prince, and that the conspiracy was the work only of a dissolving minority. This minority was unhappily still too large to allow one to speak of the conspiracy of a few persons, and it comprised too many members in exalted stations to allow Bulgaria to be entirely absolved of disgrace. As it was, public opinion dealt altogether too hardly with the Bulgarians, and even when the Prince's recall had placed quite another aspect on the affair, many were still unwilling to recall their adverse verdict, and to admit that the systematic course of corruption, pursued by an all-powerful Government, furnished extenuating circumstances of very considerable weight for this small State. But whether friendly, or the reverse, towards the Bulgarians, public opinion was everywhere on the side of the Prince, notably so in his own country, Germany.

On the other hand, *official* Germany took up a position altogether inimical to Prince Alexander, and while on the news of his imprisonment the entire country was filled with a cry of indignation, the Government coldly expressed the opinion, that the deposition of Prince Alexander was an event which, in the interests of the general peace of Europe, could not be considered otherwise than a happy one. With Prince Alexander had disappeared a great danger to peace; the firebrand had been extinguished, which threatened every moment to plunge the East, and along with it Europe, into flames. Germany could not for a moment think of espousing the Prince's cause, who had only himself to thank for his overthrow, as he had not understood how to place himself on a friendly footing with Russia. All this was

advanced in cold, harsh tones, which however lacked all intrinsic evidences of real satisfaction at the Prince's downfall.

Whence arose this surprising attitude, without doubt so wounding to German national sentiment? What were the reasons which now induced Prince Bismarck, whose one object it had ever been to stimulate the national sentiment, on this occasion to place himself in opposition to it, and to attempt to repress it? If this book belonged to that class of works, which are written twenty-five or fifty years after the events they record; if it belonged to the class of memoir literature, which, while calmly surveying the past, busies itself with isolated events,—I might venture here on an explanation, and, I believe, with success. Perhaps I may, as time goes on, be in a position to write a book on Bulgarian events, which will approximate in character to memoir literature; to-day however that, for various considerations, is impossible or rather impracticable.

Accordingly I restrict myself to the mere record of events as they occurred, and to the statement, that the *official* policy of Germany, as embodied in the person of Prince Bismarck, met with nothing less than universal approval. What disapprobation there was, found its loudest expression in those prints, which *habitually* attack the policy and person of Prince Bismarck, and in the heat of discussion it was not long before both parties had talked and written themselves into such a state of exasperation, that the real point at issue was completely changed and lost sight of. Prince Alexander's friends appeared as the foes of Prince Bismarck, the inevitable result of this mutual opposition being a position, in

which Prince Alexander appeared as leading the forces of the Free-thinkers and Ultramontanes in a violent onslaught on Prince Bismarck. Such an idea was about as false as anything could well be, but it obtained expression in the ardour with which the dispute was debated, and the louder those journals, that were hostile to Bismarck, became in the cause of Prince Alexander, the more did the organs that sided with Bismarck fall foul of them. The support of Herr Eugen Richter has cost the poor Prince of Bulgaria dear, although no thought certainly was further from his mind than, hand in hand with Eugen Richter, to call Prince Bismarck to account. Prince Alexander is doubtless grateful to all who defended him in his difficult and unhappy circumstances; but as a politician he would have much preferred that they should not have been precisely Prince Bismarck's enemies, for he could entertain no doubt as to the ultimate effect of this support.

I have said that, by dragging in interior politics into the Bulgarian question, the real position became in the heat of the discussion obscured and distorted, and that eventually it appeared as if the Opposition wished to drive Prince Bismarck into a war with Russia, and as if Prince Alexander was supporting a chauvinistic Opposition against the peace of Germany and Europe.

Il faut tout prendre au sérieux et rien au tragique. The position of the two parties was certainly not so sharply defined or radically opposed, but appearances were already weakening the position of the opposition. Between these two extreme views a middle one grew up, which I may call the Bulgarian. In Bulgaria the position of Germany was calmly considered, people not

going to the lengths that some of the hotspurs of public opinion did, who would have liked nothing better than to declare war against Russia. The Bulgarians would certainly have preferred to see Germany undertake the part of a plain, straightforward mediator, but they would have been contented had Germany only observed a strict neutrality. Such a policy would have been, on the one hand, free from all Quixotism, and on the other, perfectly feasible, without endangering peace more seriously than was already the case.

A considerable proportion of public opinion was thus at open war with the Imperial German Government, and if a portion sided with the Government, this was chiefly to be attributed to personal confidence in the justice of Prince Bismarck's policy. That almost every German in his heart found this policy bitterly against the grain—why attempt to conceal this?

One of the most efficacious weapons of the German Government party lay in the assertion, that German interests in Bulgaria were *not* affected. In Austria-Hungary such a contention was out of the question; for since Austria-Hungary had allowed the "*Drang nach osten*"* to push her on as far as Novibazar, no event that took place on the Balkan Peninsula could be without its reaction being apparent at Vienna and Pest. In both countries public opinion was roused to indignant protests against the seizure of Prince Alexander, which was supposed to be only the prelude to the complete subjugation of Bulgaria. In Hungary especially the ancient hatred of Russia was suddenly re-kindled in all its vehemence, the ardour with which it burnt appearing to

* Pressure towards the East.

forbid all thoughts of extinction. One may say indeed, that, not only in the moral judgment passed on the outrage, was the press unanimous, but also in the prominence which it gave to the political consequences, for Austria-Hungary, which must result from a change in the power of Russia in the East. In vain did the Government attempt to exercise a moderating influence on this feeling, for the consciousness, that the fire was burning at its own door, prevented it from imitating the rugged bearing of Germany. There was yet another circumstance, which furnished it with food for serious consideration. The Bulgarian *coup d'état*, which had failed so miserably, had at least had one good effect; it had thrown a clearer light on the general situation; especially so in Austria where it had enticed into daylight sundry rather dubious spectres, which as a rule from motives of prudence prefer to hide themselves. To put it briefly, the Tzechs on this occasion, in the surprise of the moment, shewed their hand openly, and unhesitatingly avowed their adhesion to those doctrines of panslavism, which Count Taaffe had for seven years been working hand and heart to supplant with a kind of rival slavism. The organs of the young Tzech party especially gave the reins to their exultation at the success of Russia's *coup*. More cautious were the old Tzech journals, but these even raised the mask so far as to allow frankly, that their ideal was an Austria inimical to the German Empire and subservient to Russia. While all the organs of the civilised world, with the exception of course of the Russian, united in branding the revolution in Sofia in the severest terms, the Tzechs were jubilant, just as if they themselves had achieved a triumph, although

what had happened had brought the country, to which they affected to be related, into a very serious plight. Congratulatory telegrams were despatched from these excellent Tzechs to the Emperor of Russia and the heroes of the Bulgarian revolution, and the Tzechs afforded proof that the Panslavist propaganda had not been worked without results. In Sofia it was the Tzechs at first who enthusiastically offered their services to the cause of the revolution, thus giving a fore-taste of what would take place, were Russia's influence to become paramount on the Lower Danube. It was exactly this feeling which operated to draw, not only the Bulgarians and Rumanians together, but also their hostile brethren, the Servians, in so far at least as the latter did not belong to the avowed Russian Party. The "*tua res agitur*" struck with startling significance on the ears of those, who till then had refused to acknowledge the truth, that the only security for their national independence lay in the mutual cohesion of the small Balkan States. The warm welcome accorded to Prince Alexander in Rumania; King Milan's letter, written with the approval of the great majority of his people, to his erst foe and conqueror; these were all significant signs of the time—a time which recognised what it had possessed, and what it had lost, in Alexander of Bulgaria.

The conduct of England and the English press, when the news of the 21st August became known, was remarkable, and I must say, very weak. During the course of a whole year England had, more than any other state, assumed the rôle of the protector of Bulgaria; and when, through the malice and stupidity of the agents of Russia, Bulgaria and her Prince had been drawn into an

attitude of antagonism to that empire, no country, Austria perhaps excepted, had greater interests involved in the maintenance of the *statu quo* in Bulgaria than England. It would be superfluous and a mere waste of words to assert that England and Russia will one day, and that perhaps not far distant, meet as foes on the field of battle. If England had a just appreciation of her own interests, *she would oppose every fresh aggrandizement of the power of Russia*, and public opinion, which in England is notoriously all-powerful, would have comprehended this. Instead of this however, all the newspapers were absolutely unanimous in declaring that England's interests were only *indirectly* affected by the events in Bulgaria, and that accordingly the task of counteracting the spread of Russian influence on the Balkan Peninsula must be left to other States. That this verdict was further ratified by public opinion, must either be ascribed to a terrible deficiency in political understanding, or it is equivalent to an abdication of the position of a Great Power. What signify a few platonic laments over this self effacement? Little or nothing!

With public opinion in Russia we shall deal very briefly. There exists in that country a Panslavonic public opinion, which receives expression, and evidences of which are easily recognised. Its joy was loud at the defeat of the "German." That, which is otherwise known as "public opinion," resolves itself in Russia into a confused medley of individual ideas, with no organ by which to receive expression. It may with safety be accepted that an enormous number of persons in Russia in their hearts bitterly condemned the outrage,

and more especially the mode in which it was carried out, but of all this nothing was allowed to appear before the "public," which is composed exclusively of the Panslavists.

CHAPTER XI.

THE TWO COUSINS.

Two important telegrams—The relations of the Prince to the Emperor of Russia—The Prince's "ingratitude," and his "English policy"—Who is to blame for the estrangement?—Vain efforts of the Prince to effect a reconciliation—The telegram of submission, a political error.

When Prince Alexander again set foot on Bulgarian soil at Rustchuk, he had, as already mentioned, a lengthy conversation with the Russian Consul. Of what took place at this interview I am ignorant, but it appears to me to admit of no doubt, that the consul declared to the Prince, that the Tzar had changed his mind, and was prepared for a reconciliation, provided this should be represented, not as a concession wrung from him, but as the spontaneous result of chivalrous magnanimity. Only thus can I understand how it came about, that Prince Alexander was induced to indite a telegram to the Tzar, and to entrust it to the Russian Consul to forward, which was to change at a stroke the situation, and impart to it an entirely new aspect. On account of its importance I give this telegram in French, in which language it was drawn up by the Prince. It ran:—

"Sire,

Ayant repris en mains le gouvernement de mon pays, j'ose soumettre à Votre Majesté l'expression de mes remerciements pour l'attitude de Votre représentant à Roustschouk. Celui-ci, par sa présence officielle à la réception qui m'a été faite, a montré au peuple

Bulgare que le gouvernement impérial ne saurait approuver l'acte révolutionnaire dirigé contre ma personne. En même temps, je sollicite de Votre Majesté la permission de Lui soumettre l'expression de toute ma gratitude pour l'envoi qu'elle a daigné ordonner en Bulgarie du général Dolgoroukoff. Car, en reprenant le pouvoir légal en mains, mon premier acte est d'exprimer à Votre Majesté ma ferme intention de faire tous les sacrifices nécessaires, afin d'aider la magnanime intention de Votre Majesté de faire sortir la Bulgarie de la crise grave qu'elle traverse. Je prie Votre Majesté d'autoriser le général Dolgoroukoff à se concerter le plus vite possible et directement avec moi. Je serais heureux de pouvoir donner à Votre Majesté la preuve définitive du dévouement inaltérable dont je suis animé envers Votre auguste personne. La principe monarchique me force à rétablir la légalité en Bulgarie et en Roumelie. La Russie, m'ayant donné ma couronne, c'est entre les mains de son Souverain que je suis prêt à la remettre.

ALEXANDRE,"

This message was followed at once by a reply from the Emperor, which was delivered to the Prince in Elena, and ran as follows :—

"J'ai reçu la télégramme de Votre Altesse. Je ne puis approuver votre retour en Bulgarie, prévoyant les conséquences sinistres qu'il peut entraîner pour le pays Bulgare, déjà si éprouvé. La mission du général Dolgoroukoff devient inopportune ; je m'abstiendrai d'elle dans le triste état de choses auquel la Bulgarie est réduite tant que vous y resterez. Votre Altesse

appréciera ce qu'Elle a à faire. Je me réserve de juger ce que me commandent la mémoire vénérée de mon père, l'intérêt de la Russie et la paix de l'Orient.

ALEXANDRE."

Any one, who wishes really to understand recent Bulgarian history, should read these telegrams through again and again, for there is nothing which places in bolder relief the relations, which subsisted between the two cousins, than this telegraphic correspondence. On the one side we see a deeply injured prince, who, in the interests of his country forgets everything that has been done to him, and with a self-control almost superhuman, holds out his hand to the man, who has constantly shewn himself in the character of an inexorable hard-hearted foe. In spite of everything he does not despair of achieving a reconciliation, and for this he demeans and and humbles himself at the very moment when he had every reason to hold his head up proud and high. What a difference there is, if with this attitude we compare the telegram of the Emperor of Russia! The events which roused all Europe have passed without leaving a trace on him; the sole significance they have possessed for him, has been the miscarriage of his hopes; his hatred of the Prince of Bulgaria has only been increased thereby, and the only thought that passed through his mind on the receipt of the submissive telegram was, "At last he has finally yielded to my might, now I can crush him once for all!" The ungenerous, cruel telegram from the Emperor is more expressive than any amount of circumlocution, and gives us an insight into a depth of hatred, from which we gladly turn away.

How has Prince Alexander incurred this hatred?

The Rusaians say that he, who owes the crown of Bulgaria to Russia, has given proof of the highest ingratitude towards that country; has estranged the Bulgarian people from Russia; and has allied himself with other Powers to the detriment of the Slavonic cause. It is difficult to disprove an accusation of "ingratitude" made in such general terms, and the Russians would have done well to adduce definite actions, by which the Prince is supposed to have given evidence of "ingratitude." Then and only then could it be shewn whether there were any real grounds for this accusation, or whether this very general expression had not been chosen precisely for the purpose of concealing the lack of really just charges.

Better grounded seems the accusation that the Prince had estranged the hearts of the Bulgarians from Russia, an assertion not entirely devoid of foundation, for the affection of the Bulgarians had in truth been alienated from Russia. This had long been notoriously the case,* and had merely gained in accentuation recently. The fact is indisputable, but the cause is not to be looked for where the Russians seek it, or pretend to seek it. Prior to the Philippopolis revolution, and notably the Servian war, the influence possessed by the Prince was certainly not of a degree to warrant a belief in such a change in the sentiments of the Bulgarian people. Thanks to Dondukoff's constitution the land had, since its freedom from Turkish rule, been uninterruptedly the theatre of internal dissensions. The Prince had been hurried first in one direction and then in another by the various factions, and in this profitless whirl it had been impossible

*See the "Struggle for Bulgarian Independence," pp. 14, 70

et seq.

for him to appear in the character of a prince, who, as the just and beneficent lord of all his subjects, stands superior to parties. Russian intrigue had borne its part in weakening the Prince's *prestige*, and thus he really did not at that time exercise the influence which the Russians imputed to him. To the Russians alone belongs the credit of the successful application of the art, by which the good-will of the Bulgarians was, within a few years, transformed into loathing; and I maintain that, except them, there existed at that period in Bulgaria no factor capable of producing the same results. When afterwards in the Servian war Russia left the Bulgarians in the lurch, and by recalling her officers tried to facilitate the victory of the Servians, affection and good-will became an affair of the past, and in their place appeared sentiments of a completely opposite character. It is however a matter of every-day experience, that the ordinary man never cares to admit his own faults, which cause him most annoyance, but invariably casts about for a scape-goat, on whom he lays the whole of the blame, which he supplements with his cordial hatred. It was precisely thus that the Russians acted with regard to Prince Alexander, and, by dint of constantly repeating their accusations, they have perhaps even come to believe in their justice themselves. The Panslavists could indeed from the very first never bring themselves to forgive the Prince his German extraction, and this it was that formed the real origin of the attacks which were directed against him.

The third accusation brought against the Prince was, that he had allied himself against Russia with a foreign Power, by which, of course, England was to be

understood. This accusation had, by dint of constant repetition, succeeded in obtaining credence, even among circles which were otherwise well-disposed towards the the Prince, and one must acknowledge, that at the first glance it certainly did appear as if Prince Alexander had turned away from Russia in order to throw himself into the arms of England, the declared foe to the Empire of the Tzars, and, with her, to pursue an anti-Russian policy. But only at the first glance, for if we study the matter less superficially and go to the root of the question, with a just appreciation of the various influences bearing on the subject, we shall find here, as is so often the case, a confusion between cause and effect. Prior to September 1885, no single fact can be cited tending to a belief in the existence or probability of any *entente politique* between the Prince and England, and certainly not of a common anti-Russian plan. Hence the presence of the Prince in London at the wedding of his brother, Prince Henry, must be construed as such a crime, or inferences must be drawn from the family connexions of the Grand-Ducal house of Hesse, of such a nature, as for every unprejudiced observer could not but appear to be wholly void of all reasonable justification. The revolution at Philippopolis caused a change. This was especially evident at the moment when Russia recalled her officers from Bulgaria, and when the other Powers simultaneously assumed an attitude of unfriendly expectancy towards the Prince. The Prince had at this time, if ever, need of a foreign Power, on which to lean, and which would represent his interests in the diplomatic negotiations. It was at this juncture that England came forward with a helping hand, and ranged herself openly on his side.

Was the Prince, who saw himself deserted by every other Power, to refuse the proffered aid, so precious at the moment, simply because the English were not liked in Russia? Was he, out of a feeling of delicacy towards Russia,—the country which had just deprived him of officers and expelled him from her army,—was he to offer England a gratuitous affront, and to create for himself and his State a position of absolute and complete isolation? I think no one could answer this question in the affirmative; this is, however, a matter of but secondary interest. The important consideration to be borne in mind is, that *Russia had not been alienated from the Prince and Bulgaria by reason of any understanding arrived at between the latter and England, but that the "rapprochement" between the Prince and England was the direct consequence of, and to a certain extent had been necessitated by, the open hostility of Russia.*

It is of importance that this view of the case should be definitely established beyond the range of controversy; for if Prince Alexander had wantonly and without cause engaged with an anti-Russian State in machinations against Russia, the Russians would assuredly have been fully justified in accusing him of ingratitude. Simply to suit their own ends have the Prince's enemies accused him of surrendering himself and country to England, and *not* because they really believed in this cock and bull story. Russian politicians know well enough, or at least ought to know, that no compact of any description had ever been formed between England and the Prince of Bulgaria, and that the whole affair consisted in nothing more than the lending of diplomatic aid on the part of England to Bulgaria.

That the English sympathies of Prince Alexander were nothing more than a ridiculous, but to Panslavism a peculiarly acceptable, pretext, is evident from the mere fact, that the implacable persecution of the Prince began from a much earlier date, *viz.*, the accession of Alexander III. to his father's throne. The subsequent development of events has shewn, that the Emperor Alexander III. nourishes an implacable hatred towards the Prince, a hatred of such violence as to preclude its explanation merely by the political accusations brought against the Prince. Although Prince Alexander has often propounded to himself the question, as to what he personally can have done to the Emperor to call forth such a hatred, yet he has failed to arrive at an explanation in any way satisfactory. Many other persons, possessed of an accurate acquaintance with the whole of the circumstances, have occupied themselves with the same question, but with no better results. We are thus restricted to the region of conjecture *pur et simple*, the most plausible supposition being, that the cause of the pronounced ill-will, which Alexander III. bears towards his cousin, is that the latter is possessed of just those moral qualities which the former lacks. The following has also been adduced in explanation: Alexander II. entertained a most lively affection for Prince Alexander, and whenever the latter paid him a visit in Russia, invariably distinguished him in the most flattering manner, treating him indeed almost as a favourite son. This circumstance was viewed with unfavourable eyes by more than one of the Grand-Dukes. If with these considerations we couple the fact that, immediately on the demise of Alexander II., everyone who had been

a favourite with him fell into disgrace with his son Alexander III., it is not too much to say, that the anger of Alexander III. was merely the result of the favour of Alexander II.

I offer these explanations as the results, to which much various speculation and reflection appear to point, without venturing on a decisive opinion for, or against, either. One thing is certain, that the Emperor Alexander III. entertained towards the Prince a personal hatred, from which no considerations could turn him. It has been said, that Prince Alexander committed a serious fault in not placing his relations towards Russia and the Tzar on a better footing. Those who bring this accusation can certainly have no notion of what the exertions were that Prince Alexander made in this sense. It was not insensibility to insult, which caused the Prince quietly to endure every blow aimed at him by the Emperor of Russia, but primarily the interests of his country, and in a secondary degree the hope, which he never quite gave up, that a reconciliation was still within the bounds of possibility. After the splendid victories, which the Prince won over the Servians, at the moment when it appeared as if he was only in a comparatively insignificant degree dependent on the good-will of Russia, he held out the hand of reconciliation to the Tzar only to see it again spurned.* Still further attempts were subsequently made to bring about a *rapprochement*, but invariably met with similar failure. All advances were met with ill-will and prejudice, so as almost to give credibility to the story of the laconic

* For the account of this incident, and the manner in which General Kaulbars was mixed up with it, see "Struggle for Bulgarian Independence," p. 272.

reply, said to have been given by the Emperor to a certain personage, who, with the view of acting as mediator, had asked him what was the real cause of his dislike :—
“ Cet homme me déplait.”

In the face of this autocratic will there was nothing to be done, and the Prince might well give up all hopes of ever being able to come to terms with the Tzar. After the events of the 21st August it is scarcely possible, that the Prince could still have entertained even a shadow of doubt as to the extent to which he was hated by his powerful relative, and yet he once again repeated his endeavours which had so often failed, inditing the telegram from Rustchuk to the Emperor, which I have reproduced at the opening of this chapter.

Much discussion has taken place as to whether Prince Alexander acted wisely in this matter, and whether indeed he even had the right to despatch this telegram without first of all consulting his advisers. Now that the reply is known, which the Russian Emperor returned, we cannot but designate this telegram as a serious political error, the most serious and most fatal that the Prince ever committed during the whole course of his reign. His experiences the previous year at Pirot should have taught him how little faith ought to be placed on Russian promises; but more than all, ought he not to have surrendered so unreservedly to the good graces, or otherwise, of the Tzar. This act of submission was too complete, too unconditional, and, supposing it to have had the effect on the Tzar that it would probably have had on any other man, Prince Alexander could no longer have been the independent prince which he was after his Servian victories, but he *would* in truth this time

have received his crown at the hands of Russia, while eight years before the Powers had taken part, if only as assenting parties, in his nomination. It must never be forgotten however, that it is always easier for the student *after* the event to pass judgment on what has happened, than for those who have to make their decision at the decisive moment. Wearied with an agitating journey, deeply depressed by the treachery of his own officers—such were the circumstances under which the Prince had returned to his country, where the news awaited him, that the revolution was still not completely ended, that Sofia was still in the hands of the rebel troops, and that the Shumla garrison was still wavering. After his sorrowful experiences of the last week, must not these reports have appeared to him to wear a darker and more sinister aspect than in reality they did? Is it not intelligible, that he should have looked at them with the eyes of a pessimist? Was it not excusable, that he should have grasped at the straw, which the Russian Consul with unquestionable adroitness held out to him? Many another would in his position have grasped eagerly at that straw, without a suspicion of the barbed hook concealed within it.

Man is only too readily inclined to judge others by himself. This was the mistake which Prince Alexander made regarding the Emperor of Russia, and which he bitterly repented. He may now look back at the past with regret; but whether the error of the Prince will altogether fill the Emperor of Russia with inward gratification—this need not be discussed!

CHAPTER XII.

SOFIA BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF THE PRINCE

Proclamation by the Prince—Resignation of Karaveloff's Government—Mutkuroff enters Sofia with the Rumelian Regiments—Actual military dictatorship—Karaveloff, Tsanoff, Zankoff, Clement, Nikiforoff, and Panoff arrested—Consternation in Sofia—Zeal of the Rumelians abates—No executions—The Rebels at Bresnik.

While Prince Alexander was making his triumphal progress through the country, Sofia had been the scene of exciting events. On the 29th August, a proclamation by Prince Alexander was placarded in the town, which had been sent by telegram from Stambuloff to the authorities for the time being in Sofia, viz.: the Ministers Karaveloff, Stoiloff, Geshoff, Ivantshoff, Nikiforoff, Panoff and Oroshakoff. This telegram at the same time contained an order to surrender the management of the different State departments to the Secretariat-General. The Prince's proclamation ran—

“To the Bulgarian People!

We, Alexander I.,

By the grace of God and the will of the People,

Prince of Bulgaria,

Inform our beloved people, that we have to-day entered Bulgarian territory, and have taken over the Government of the country, and we hereby approve and confirm everything that has been done by our Regency, consisting of the President of the National Assembly, M. Stambuloff, and M. P. R. Slavejkoff and Dr. Stranski. Similarly we confirm the Ministry

formed by the Regency, as also Lieutenant-Colonel Mutkuroff in his post of Commander-in-Chief of the Bulgarian troops. At the same time we express our deepest acknowledgments to the Bulgarian People and Army, who in such critical moments declared for the Fatherland, who have known how to preserve the honour, independence, and good name of Bulgaria, and have remained loyal to our throne; and we implore the blessing of God on our dear Fatherland, Bulgaria, for whose greatness, prosperity, and welfare we shall as heretofore strive. Long live Bulgaria!

Given at the town of Rustchuk, the ^{17th}/_{29th} August, 1886.

ALEXANDER."

As on the receipt of this proclamation the Ministers immediately resigned their offices, Sofia found itself for several days to all intents and purposes without a Government, for the Secretariat-General did not venture to take any decided steps, and no further commands as to details were received from the Prince. Mutkuroff had already before the resignation of Karaveloff telegraphed to Sofia, that he was coming thither with the regiments he had collected at Philippopolis, and would disarm the rebels, or attack and annihilate them. Karaveloff had always replied to the effect that Mutkuroff had better remain quiet at Philippopolis as Popoff was quite able, single-handed, to settle matters with the rebels, and he even enforced this injunction with the expression of his fear, that the approach of Mutkuroff might so irritate the rebels, that they would reply by bombarding Sofia, a measure to which the commandant of the rebel artillery, Captain Slatarski, had already shewn himself not disinclined. This declaration of Karaveloff failed to

convince Mutkuroff, who moreover was urged on by his officers, who unanimously demanded to be led against the rebels. In addition Karaveloff's hesitation to allow the troops to come to Sofia excited all the more suspicion from the fact, that in his proclamation the Prince's name had not been mentioned. The Rumelians believed in some fresh act of treason, and determined, contrary to Karaveloff's wishes, to march with their whole strength on Sofia in order there to learn the truth.

No sooner said than done; and Mutkuroff at the head of the Philippopolis, Balkan, Rhodope, and Slivno Regiments, a regiment of cavalry, and several batteries, started by forced marches *en route* for Sofia, which he reached on Monday, the 30th August. About midday under a burning sun and covered with dust, Mutkuroff's troops, led by the Philippopolis Regiment, marched into Sofia joyfully welcomed by the populace, who had hurried out to meet them. After the long march the troops did not appear to the best advantage, the more so that their uniforms were old and much worn, it having been thought a pity to use their new ones, but it was impossible not to notice the air of determination which pervaded their movements, and the extraordinary energy of the cheer they gave as they marched past the Prince's palace. The men evidently understood why they had come, their feelings being those of conquerors and *avengers*. It had been said, that after the Philippopolis revolution East-Rumelia had not been united with, but incorporated into, Bulgaria; now however the relations were reversed, and the Rumelians marched into Sofia as conquerors and, to all appearances, with the firm resolve to shew the capital how revolutions are suppressed and rebels punished. It

was not long before swarms of infantry and cavalry patrols, 20 to 30 men strong, and conducted by gendarmes, were to be seen moving out towards the various quarters of the city, which at one blow appeared to have lost its peaceful and calm aspect. It was to all intents and purposes a state of siege; and it was at the same time a military dictatorship in deed, if not in name, with which Mutkuroff saw himself entrusted by his East-Rumelian followers. The patrols had with incredible rapidity surrounded a large number of houses, and a few minutes later they appeared bringing in the arrested. No sooner had they placed them in safe custody than they started off again in pursuit of fresh suspects. The city was in a state of feverish excitement, not only on account of the large number of arrests made (considerably over a hundred,) but also of the high position of those arrested. Zankoff, Burmoff, and other members of the Provisional Government, the Minister for Foreign Affairs Tsanoff, Karaveloff's co-regent Major Nikiforoff, the War Minister Major Panoff, and finally Karaveloff himself were among the arrested. All submitted, if indeed under protest, yet without resistance, to the order for their arrest, with the single exception of Bishop Clement, who, relying on the protection of his priestly garb, insolently refused to follow the officers who arrested him. These were certainly not in the humour to stand on much ceremony with an arch-traitor, merely because he happened to be a bishop, and they simply dragged him forcibly out of the house, in front of which were waiting the men of the patrol. There Clement made a second attempt to avoid being arrested; he raised the cross which hung by a chain from his neck, and, holding it out to the soldiers, cried, "Do

you not see who I am? Will you dare to imprison a bishop?" Clement had however mistaken his men; a soldier snatched the cross out of his hand, smashing the chain to pieces, and threw it at his feet with the words, "Forward! *Pasholl**!", and Clement found there was nothing for it but to comply just like an ordinary mortal.

The rapidity and uncompromising manner, in which the arrests were carried out, threw the whole city into consternation, and the general belief was that the Rumelians would not stop here, but would immediately proceed to executions. Fully justified as was a large proportion of the arrests, there were others however which filled many earnest and thoughtful men with grave apprehensions. In the first place the arrests produced the impression that they had been determined on in a very arbitrary manner; the Rumelians had felt it necessary to deal a heavy blow, and they were now striking out right and left at random. Moreover it was considered that some of the arrests, even, *if* justified, were from a political point of view unwise and ill-timed, as they might tend to induce the belief that the outrage of the 21st August had actually been the work of a large political party, and, above all, had been perpetrated with the connivance of a large portion of the intelligence of Bulgaria. The arrest especially of Karaveloff was viewed in this sense, and efforts were immediately made to induce Mutkuroff to rescind it. These were so far successful, that Mutkuroff was induced with great difficulty to allow Karaveloff, and with him Tsanoff and Panoff, to be released from prison and to be

* The imperative and contemptuous Russian equivalent to our "Move on!"—*Trans.*

merely placed under arrest in their houses, a measure unproductive of any real change from a political point of view in the general impression.

While in the case of many of those arrested the grounds for the arrest were perfectly clear, there were many others as to which, with regard to the reasons which had induced Mutkuroff to order them, the greatest uncertainty prevailed. Notably was this the case regarding Karaveloff, Tsanoff, Panoff and Nikiforoff. It soon however became known that Bendereff and Grueff had made statements most seriously incriminating these persons. Bendereff and Grueff had, on the break-up of the Provisional Government, made themselves scarce, and, dressed as civilians, had reached the neighbourhood of Rahova. They had there tried to induce a fisherman in one of the villages to ferry them over the Danube in his boat to Rumanian territory, but their conduct was so suspicious that the fisherman refused to comply with their request, and with the assistance of some of his comrades arrested the two men, and brought them into Rahova, where they were immediately recognised. In reply to telegraphic enquiries, addressed to Lieutenant-Colonel Lubomski, commanding the West-Danube District, an order was received directing the immediate removal of the prisoners under strong escort to Widdin. These orders were immediately complied with, and by the following day the two reached Widdin on board the steamer "Tegethoff," Grueff still preserving his soldier-like bearing, while Bendereff on the contrary was completely broken. Lubomski had the laudable intention of dealing very shortly with them, and after a summary trial having them shot. Unhappily sub-

sequent scruples induced him to enquire from Sofia what course he should pursue with the prisoners, sending thither at the same time Bendereff's and Grueff's statements. The Government, whether with a view to obtaining further information from them, or from weakness, telegraphed back to Lubomski to put a stop for the time being to the court-martial proceedings, utilising however at the same time, for the arrest in Sofia of Karaveloff, Tsanoff, and Nikiforoff, the statements mentioned.

Prince Alexander had been left in ignorance of these last events in Sofia, as the Rumelians wished to make a clean sweep of the conspirators before his arrival. After the first burst however their energy began to decline, and those, who had been expecting to see Clement, Zankoff, and some of the other ringleaders shot with but a short shrift, were disappointed in their hopes. Mutkuroff and his officers will not be so much blamed for this, when one learns, that foreign diplomacy had in the meantime discovered, that the arrested rebels were *au fond* interesting and engaging personages, to shoot whom would be to inflict a deplorable loss on the world ! Thus it came about that when Prince Alexander reached Sofia, no proceedings had so far been commenced against those in arrest. Indeed Karaveloff and Tsanoff had been restored their freedom by the Prince's orders, and no attack had as yet been made on the rebels at Pernik.

With regard to the latter, they had entrenched themselves at Pernik, and had demanded to open negotiations with the Government. With Mutkuroff's arrival the superiority of the Government troops was so overwhelming that they could have crushed the rebels with

but little difficulty, and, notwithstanding the general repugnance of the Bulgarian character to bloodshed, many officers were impatient to attack the mutineers. Once again however diplomacy triumphed, and in view of the threat of Bogdanoff, that Russia would reply to an attack on Major Stoyanoff's troops by a military occupation of Bulgaria, the Bulgarians were fain to content themselves with cutting off the mutineers' retreat towards the Servian and Turkish frontiers, and to await the laying down of their arms. That they would not have long to wait was well known, as deserters, who had already come over to the Prince's troops, brought in reports of increasing discontent amongst the rebels. As information was at the same time received that a number of officers, foreseeing the breakdown of their enterprise, had fled across the Turkish frontier, the delay caused all the less uneasiness. The further course of affairs has shewn that this was decidedly the wisest method, for in a few days the rebels, when they saw themselves hemmed in by the loyal troops, who were much superior to them in numbers, and that their own soldiers, who were gradually learning how matters really stood, were beginning to threaten them, surrendered at discretion. It is absolutely untrue that Prince Alexander had ever promised to pardon these troops, provided they surrendered. This kind of weakness was quite foreign to the Prince's nature, and if he had acted in accordance with his own will, very few indeed of the rebel officers would now be enjoying life.

CHAPTER XIII.

ABDICATION OF THE PRINCE.

The Prince informs the officers that he is going to resign—Negotiations for the formation of a Regency—The Powers veto the only method by which permanent tranquillity is possible, viz., the execution of the conspirators—Bogdanoff again—Fides punica—The Stambuloff-Karaveloff-Mutkuroff Regency—Plan of the officers for the retention of the Prince.

When Prince Alexander on the 3rd September, on the conclusion of the parade of the troops, followed by his officers entered the palace, the rumour had already been spread, that the Prince, in consequence of a telegram, couched in most unfavourable terms, from the Emperor of Russia, was about to resign the government. This rumour, which at the first glance appeared so incredible, had spread the deepest dejection amongst the officers, who in a mood half sorrowful, half agitated, repaired to the hall, where the Prince was to address them. Men trod softly and spoke in undertones, while the palace wore the aspect almost of a house of mourning. The Prince was deeply affected as he addressed the officers to the following effect, that for seven years he had laboured for the independence and in the interests of Bulgaria, the welfare especially of the army and the officers having ever been his constant care; he had considered the latter as his family, his children, and it was in his present position a great solace to him to see himself surrounded by his officers, who had fought side by side with him for the glory of Bulgaria. On that terrible night he had,

when the first sounds of tumult reached him, enquired whether it was soldiers who were there, and the affirmative answer he received had set his mind completely at rest, confident as he was in his army. He offered those officers his thanks, who, like Mutkuroff and Popoff, had under most trying circumstances remained loyal to him, and had thus redeemed the honour of the Bulgarian army. It was impossible for him to remain any longer in Bulgaria, for he must dismiss all hopes of ever being able to overcome the antipathy of the Emperor of Russia towards himself. He had before everything the interests of Bulgaria at heart, and since these were injuriously affected by his unfavourable relations with Russia, he was about to make the greatest sacrifice for his country that it was in his power to offer. He could now with a lighter heart withdraw from the country, seeing, as he did, his faithful officers assembled around him, and he should be able to cherish the hope, that, now that the rebellion had been successfully defeated, tranquillity and order would be preserved in Bulgaria. He begged his officers to shew due respect and obedience to the Regency that he had installed. His thoughts, while far away, would be ever with Bulgaria, and he would ever pray to God for her welfare.

The effect of this speech baffles description, every officer present bursting into tears. Deeply moved, the Prince embraced Mutkuroff and Popoff, who in tones of despair, cried, "*Without Your Highness there is no Bulgaria!*" The Diplomatic Corps was present at this reception, and even those amongst its representatives, who formerly had largely contributed towards rendering the Prince's life a burden, left the palace in a frame of

mind not easy of description. That which they had so long striven for was at length attained, but their success was devoid of any real gratification.

During the afternoon the Prince received several political personages and a few diplomatists, among the latter being the German and Russian Representatives. The information, which he had already received in Philippopolis, had shewn him that he could not count on the active aid of any of the great Powers, and that even England would only extend to him a purely platonic sympathy. Were he, trusting in England, to remain in Sofia, he might very likely experience the fate of *Gordon*, and he was altogether of too cold and practical a turn of mind to think for an instant of running the risk of sharing Gordon's fate on the strength of English sympathy! That Germany had joined with Russia to render his stay in Bulgaria impossible, the Prince had for the last two days been aware. With her whole weight Germany had opposed the execution of the traitors, both by means of direct representations to the Prince, and also by the emphatic declaration made to the President of the Ministry, Radoslavoff, by the German Representative, Herr von Saldern, that Prince Bismarck would hold him (Radoslavoff) personally responsible if one of the conspirators was executed. After what the Prince had already learnt of the views of Germany, the fresh communications of the German Representative could not surprise him. The Prince found himself not only face to face with the hostility of Russia, but also with the open ill-will of official Germany, with which too, Austria-Hungary acquiesced, if in less pronounced terms, and with scarcely veiled disinclination. To the country

in its distracted condition order could be restored, and the army become once more a firm and reliable support to the Throne and the Law, only by one means—the ruthless punishment of every guilty man. The Powers denied this means!—the position of the Prince was thenceforth untenable.

One may imagine the Prince's feelings when he received the Russian Consul, Bogdanoff. This gentleman is said to have expressed the opinion, that the Prince ought to be most grateful to him, as it was solely through him that his life had been saved. As this assertion has been repeated, and has obtained a certain amount of credence, it may as well be at once mentioned, that the investigation proved clearly, that Bogdanoff had not a shadow of right to the gratitude which he claimed. The only thing that transpired regarding his interview with the Prince was, that he read him a telegram from his Government, in which it was stated in the most unequivocal terms, that the Emperor of Russia, in the event of the Prince's resignation, was prepared to give the fullest and most unreserved recognition to the complete union of East-Rumelia and Bulgaria. The Prince requested Bogdanoff to give him a copy of this telegram, which the latter at once promised to do, but managed to put it off until the Prince had left Sofia. It was then asserted by the Russians, that the telegram in question never contained anything of the sort, and that they were wholly at a loss to explain the misapprehension on the part of the Prince. Having obtained the abdication of the Prince, they were not possessed of even sufficient mercantile honesty to pay the price of their bargain! Bogdanoff too, in opposition

to the most ordinary dictates of tact and taste, pressed the Prince to hasten his departure as much as possible. In this for the rest he was but meeting the Prince's own wishes, who, when once he had irrevocably decided on abdication, only desired to give effect to it with the least possible delay.

One duty however remained yet for the Prince to fulfil. Care must be taken, that on his departure the country should not fall into any sort of anarchy, but should have a legally constituted government, to which the whole country, as well as the army, should render obedience.

The installation of a Regency and formation of a Ministry was no easy matter, for not only was it necessary to find persons to undertake the duties, who enjoyed some real consideration in the country, but all parties must as far as possible be represented, so as to give a truly national character to both the Regency and Government, to elevate them above the reproach of being a party government. It is everywhere a difficult matter to bring parties together under one "umbrella," and this is doubly so the case in Bulgaria, where the various party-leaders are for the most part swayed by personal animosity. The introduction of Karaveloff presented the greatest difficulty, but special importance was attached to this step on account of the great influence he still exercised. The Prince and Stambuloff were specially of the opinion, that Karaveloff should not be passed over, while on the other hand the military element, who were firmly convinced of his treachery, wished to have nothing to do with him. After long and wearisome discussion of the various *pros* and *cons*,

an agreement was at last arrived at that Stambuloff, Karaveloff and Mutkuroff should form the Regency, while the Ministry should be composed as follows:—Radoslavoff, President and Minister of the Interior; Nacevics, Foreign Affairs; Stoiloff, Justice; Colonel Nikolayeff, War; Geshoff, Finances; and Ivantshoff, Education. It was not till the morning of the 7th September, the day fixed for the Prince's departure, that the new Government finally came into operation.

Still more difficult than the negotiations with the politicians were those with the officers, who were less willing even than the former to admit the necessity for the Prince to quit the country. These officers had risked their heads and necks to bring the Prince back to Bulgaria; for them had his return been a real triumph; and now all this was at one blow to be rendered fruitless! Because, forsooth, Russia did not will it! The officers knew right well that they were acting in opposition to the will of Russia when they recalled the Prince; they had already been aware that he was hated by the Russians; and yet this knowledge had had no influence on their actions. Many officers were personally attached to the Prince; others were firmly convinced that with Prince Alexander the independence of Bulgaria would be lost; others again dreaded the retaliatory measures that the Russians would pursue towards them once they entered the country. These various motives resulted in one uniform desire; and this uniform desire found expression shortly and simply in the sentence, "*We will not allow the Prince to go!*" Prince Alexander knew right well what in this respect were the sentiments of the general body of officers, and for this reason he directed all his

endeavours towards making them comprehend the necessity for his resignation. Having already discussed the matter at length and in great detail with individual officers, he repaired on the 6th September to the camp in front of the city, and there in the officers' club made a long speech to them, in which he requested them to refrain from all demonstrations in his favour, and to allow him to depart quietly. He was answered by Major Popoff, who assured the Prince of the unconditional loyalty and devotion of the army, and reiterated the prayer that he would not deprive them of a Prince, who had led them to victory and renown. In a subsequent interview Captain Veltscheff declared to the Prince, that the army would at all times remain true to him and would ever look to him as their sole chief. Should the Prince proceed abroad, the army would merely look on his departure in the light of temporary leave; in short that the army would not consent to separation from him. Other regimental commanders expressed themselves in similar terms, and although none said to his face that they would forcibly prevent his departure, it was nevertheless just touch and go, and until the night of the 6th-7th September, no one could say for certain what would happen.

As the world is still in ignorance of what will be the eventual result for Bulgaria, I am precluded by obvious considerations of discretion from saying anything further regarding the plans that were formed on that day; and more than all is it impossible to name the individuals, who took part in the affair. This much however may be briefly indicated; it was generally agreed that under no circumstances ought the Bulgarian army to employ force

against their Prince and military chief, and hence a position of considerable embarrassment was the result. Eventually it was thought that the following offered a solution to the difficulty: the Prince was to be permitted quietly to make his abdication, and then to depart; then at some point half-way between Sofia and Lompalanka he was to be stopped and, being then no longer Prince, he was to be forcibly brought back. In the meantime a military dictatorship was to be installed in Sofia, and on the return of the Prince to Sofia the work of vengeance was to be completed. It was intended that the Prince should not take any part in this; he was to be held completely aloof from the whole affair, and to stay at Sofia not as Prince, but as the honoured "guest" of the army. Then, when the work of retribution had been brought to an end, and tranquillity once more restored to the country, the Grand Sobranye was to meet and re-elect the Prince as Prince of Bulgaria. There was no attempt to blink the fact that this enterprise carried many elements of failure with it; but it was said that any way they were lost, and if they were indeed to perish, it would at least be well to drag the foe to perdition along with themselves. There was also the *arrière pensée*, that, should a conflagration once be ignited here in Bulgaria, the flames might very likely spread beyond the confines of the country to Europe, and a complete change in the political situation might be the result.

Prince Alexander had no knowledge whatever of these plans; he was however filled with an undefined feeling that fresh surprises might be in store for him. As affairs then stood, these could only emanate from the army, and accordingly on the night of the 6th-7th Sep-

tember he summoned all the staff officers and regimental commanders to the palace, and there spoke with each individually, and made each give him his word of honour not to oppose his departure. The officers were unable to refuse the Prince's request; they promised what he required; and thus, and only thus, did it become possible for Prince Alexander to quit Bulgaria.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE LEAVE-TAKING OF A DEPOSED PRINCE.

Departure from Sofia—From Sofia to Lompalanka—On board the "Alexander"—Magnificent reception at Widdin—Demonstrations by the Rumanians and Servians—At Turn-Severin—"Auf Wiedersehen!"

Thanks to the Prince's indefatigable exertions it was tolerably certain by the forenoon of the 7th September, that the departure would be quietly accomplished, and having now taken measures to ensure as far as possible the conduct of affairs and the tranquillity of the country, the Prince issued the following manifesto to his people:—

"Having become convinced of the painful truth that my departure from Bulgaria will facilitate the re-establishment of good relations between Bulgaria and Russia, and having received from the Government of the Emperor of Russia the assurance that the independence, freedom and rights of our State shall remain intact, and that no one shall interpose in the interior affairs of the country, I declare to my much-beloved people, that I have renounced the Bulgarian throne. I desire by this act to prove to the whole world how dear to me are the interests of the Fatherland, and that for its independence I am ready to sacrifice everything, even that which is dearer to me than life. While expressing my sincerest thanks for the constant devotion shewn me by the nation, equally during the periods of adversity as of prosperity, through which the nation and throne have passed

since my arrival in Bulgaria, I now take leave of the Principality, at the same time that I pray God, and shall ever till the end of my days pray Him, to preserve Bulgaria and her independence. I name as Regents Stambuloff, Karaveloff, and Mutkuroff. I command all Bulgarian state officials to submit to the commands and ordinances of the Regency which has been instituted by me, and to maintain order in the country, so that in the otherwise difficult position of the Fatherland, any further complication may be avoided. God defend Bulgaria!

Given at my Palace at Sofia, the 7th September, 1886.

ALEXANDER."

With the moment that saw the Prince's signature appended to this manifesto, may be said to have closed the second act of this history of revolution. The Prince, who had been driven out by a band of criminals, and exultingly recalled to his country by his people, had been forced to yield before a stronger, an implacable Power, to satisfy whose rancour he had to be sacrificed by the States of Europe. The Prince's term of activity as a ruler was, at least for the present, concluded, and there remained now for him but the cruel task of bidding farewell to his people, his army, and his friends. Yes indeed his friends! for in a most remarkable manner, and contrary to all precedents, his friends had remained true to this Prince even in adversity.

At 4 o'clock in the afternoon all the higher officials, the officers of the garrison, and the Diplomatic Corps were assembled in the palace. It was in the full light of day that the Prince desired to quit his country, so that no one might be able to say, that he had fled in

secret as a malefactor, and that all the world might know, that it was not the Bulgarians who had rendered his further rule impossible. For the same reason he had expressed the desire, that members of the Regency and Ministry should accompany him as far as Turn-Severin, in order, by so doing, to prove that the country still up to the very last moment honoured its Prince. The Prince only made a brief speech to those assembled; he thanked the nation and the army for the proofs of love and devotion which they had given him; he exhorted them to be obedient to the Regency; and expressed his wish to the country, that its future Prince might strive as diligently as he had done for its welfare. Deeply affected as was the Prince, those present were even more so.

At half-past four the Prince's standard, flying at the palace was lowered, the guard of honour presented arms, and amidst the never-ending cheers of a deeply-moved populace, the Prince stepped into the carriage which was to convey him to Lompalanka. Yet a few last pressures of the hand, a few general adieus, and the *cortège* moved off, accompanied by some forty sabres of the Prince's body-guard, and followed by a long row of carriages, the occupants of which desired to accompany the Prince, some as far as Turn-Severin, some as far as a *khan*, distant eleven kilometres from Sofia. The whole city was arrayed in flags; troops formed an avenue up to its very entrance; and the pavements and windows of the houses thronged with such a crowd as had never yet been seen in Sofia. Before the city gate were drawn up the cavalry, and an enormous multitude of persons, who had been unable to get a place in the

streets. At all points demonstrations of devotion, of love, and of sorrow!

Thus it was that Prince Alexander took leave of his Capital! And yet peaceful relations were to be impossible in Bulgaria "*tant que vous y resterez!*" * * *

At the small *khan* above mentioned, eleven kilomètres from Sofia, the first halt was made, and here the Prince took leave of those officers, who were to remain at Sofia. Amongst these were Mutkuroff, who had first of all at Philippopolis declared for the Prince, and had then marched with the East-Rumelian regiments against the rebel troops at Sofia; Major Popoff, the Commandant of the Alexander Regiment, and the true friend of the Prince; Major Petroff, his Chief of the Staff during the Servian war; all the Commanders of the regiments quartered at Sofia, and many other officers.

The stay at the *khan* was only a very brief one; the Prince spoke a few words to his officers, then embracing and kissing them, he again entered the carriage, and the *cortège* moved off once more amidst the cheers of the officers. The procession had now considerably diminished in size, consisting of only nine four-horse carriages; in the first sat the Prince with Stambuloff, followed in the remaining ones by Prince Francis Joseph, Herr von Riedesel, the aides-de-camp Captains Winaroff, Uwalieff, Stoyanoff; the Minister of War Nikolayeff, Major Panitza, the Regent Karaveloff, the Ministers Radoslavoff, Stoiloff and Grekoff, my colleagues Chirol of the "Standard," Fillion of the "Agence Havas," and I. The cavalry escort was under the command of First-Lieutenant Taneff, who, together with the second in command Lieutenant Stoitscheff, had begged for the honour of

accompanying the Prince on horseback as far as Lompalanka, the rank and file being relieved at intervals. It was no mean ride, covering, as they did, 159 kilometres in 19 hours continuously, with the exception of the few brief halts, at a steady trot, a performance the merits of which, German cavalry officers will be able to appreciate. Taneff had commanded the Prince's personal escort throughout the whole of the Servian war, and indeed, with the exception of the Prince's Private Secretary Menges, who had remained behind at Sofia to wind up his private affairs, the entire personal staff of the Prince, as it had followed him during the Servian war, was assembled here. . Mournful reminiscence!

The Prince, now that the decisive step had actually been taken, was eager to leave Bulgaria as soon as possible, and accordingly every effort was made to accelerate the journey. The Balkans were crossed at night, and at Klissura, a village lying on the further side, the horses were allowed only a brief rest. Ere the grey of the dawn appeared the journey was resumed. I do not know whether this excessive haste was due to a fear, that the departure of the Prince might still encounter some unexpected obstacle on the news of his abdication being spread through the country. In the few and insignificant hamlets, through which we passed during the day, the news of the Prince's departure had hardly become known, and yet all had hastened, by the decoration of the houses and hanging out of flags, to shew honour to the departing Sovereign. These preparations were on a very small, very modest scale; but anyone who is acquainted with the Bulgarian peasant, knows also how difficult it is to induce him to give any outward

expression to his feelings, and hence to such these simple—miserable, if you will—demonstrations had something very touching.

On arriving about 2 o'clock at Lompalanka, we found the landing-stage decorated and surrounded by an immense crowd. The Prince's yacht, "the Alexander," had already arrived, and along with her "the Sava," a steamer belonging to the "Danube Steam Navigation Company," which had been engaged for the voyage. Berkovsky, the Prefect of Lompalanka, received the Prince with an address, while at the same time he was greeted by the officers from Widdin and Rustchuk, who had arrived with their respective Brigade Commandants, Lieutenant-Colonels Lubomski and Filoff. They too wished to accompany the Prince, some as far as Widdin, others to Turn-Severin. It was owing to the abnormal size to which the Prince's suite would thus attain, that the Austrian boat had been summoned to Lompalanka in addition to "the Alexander," it being intended that she should act as an hotel-boat.

I pass over the harrowing scenes that were here again enacted at the final parting. No eye remained dry, and the opinion was repeatedly expressed, that it was a great mistake ever to have allowed the Prince to depart. There was one moment during the voyage when all eyes were turned with an expression of surprise towards "the Alexander." She had so far been following "the Sava" several hundred mètres in rear. She was seen suddenly to put on full steam and rapidly to overhaul the leading boat. Did "the Alexander" intend to take "the Sava" and to conduct the Prince back? It almost seemed so; but the interval once more

increased, and the two boats continued on their placid course. With regard to this circumstance, it may be mentioned, that the crew of "the Alexander" had been replaced by that of the gun-boat "Golubtchik," the naval cadet Gostopriémoff, who had alone acted loyally towards the Prince during the time that he was a prisoner on board "the Alexander," being the only one of her former crew left on the boat. To him fell the mournful duty, as the senior and sole Bulgarian naval officer, to command "the Alexander" on the occasion of the Prince's last voyage.

Shortly after breakfast we neared the town and fortress of Widdin, a town which during the march of ages has undergone many a siege, many a storm, many memorable events, but certainly none such as it was to see to-day.

Hardly had the ramparts, rising sheer up from the banks, become visible in the distance, when two steamers met us, one carrying the Rumanian, the other the Greek flag. Both were crammed full of men, had bands on board, and were dressed out to the full in flags. As we passed by, the Prince was saluted with loud hurrahs, the bands playing. Both boats then turned about and followed in the wake of the "Alexander." In the meanwhile we had approached tolerably close to the Widdin works, when all at once the ramparts of the fortress were enveloped in clouds of smoke, while the thunder of the heavy fortress guns rolled towards us. The nearer we approached the louder became the thunder of the cannon, while, in the intervals between the puffs of smoke, as they rose in the air, we could descry the flags fluttering on the ramparts. On the banks of the Danube, in the

space between the river and the ramparts, stood the garrison in one long line, only broken at intervals by one of the field-pieces, which had been placed along the shore so as to join in a simultaneous salute with the fortress guns on the ramparts above. In the space in rear between the troops and the ramparts stood a closely packed crowd, which became denser and denser as we neared the landing-stage. With the thunder of the guns was mingled the deafening cheers of the troops and the populace; and when at length the steamer, shrouded in volumes of smoke, ran alongside the landing-stage, anyone present who had not been acquainted with the actual circumstances, would have sworn that it was an enthusiastic welcome that was being accorded by a loyal nation to a beloved prince, returning home from a glorious and victorious campaign.

Alas, that such should have been a mistake!

When Prince Alexander stepped on shore amid the sounds of the regimental band, a scene presented itself such as perhaps a man may see once in a lifetime. On the landing bridge, surrounded by the officers of the garrison, stood Major Usunoff, the same who had the previous year so stoutly beaten off the Servian storming columns. All broke into cheers, but it was plain that the cheers were far other than cheers of joy. As the Prince stepped on to the land the pressure of the crowd became so great that he was well-nigh crushed. It was only with considerable difficulty that he was able to make his way through the people, and, rather carried than walking, succeeded at length in reaching the point on the "Uferstrasse" where was situated the Prefecture. While he entered the building, I remained outside with

the crowd. The temperature was sultry in a figurative as well as an actual sense. It was here that the actual and final adieu to Bulgarian soil, here that the actual parting was to take place. I beheld here men weep, whom I would never have believed capable of tears, men, whom under other circumstances I had seen act with a coldness and insensibility such as to border on callousness.

Inside the Prefecture the same sort of thing took place. What the Prince heard there was only a variation of the words addressed to him in Sofia—"Highness, without you there is no Bulgaria."

The situation was at one moment exceedingly critical; Lieutenant-Colonel Lubomski made no secret of his apprehension that the populace and the officers would prevent the Prince's departure. On this, the Prince stepped out on to the balcony, and in loud, clear tones addressed the populace, explaining to them, that the well-being of the country made it imperative on him to leave Bulgaria, and once more thanked all those who had shewn him affection and good-will during his stay. These words had the desired effect of quieting the crowd, and the Prince was able at length to reach the boat, which, under a renewed salute of guns, cast loose her moorings and moved off once more amidst demonstrations from civil and military of an enthusiasm, which under the circumstances can only be characterised as heart-rending. This harrowing spectacle of a Prince torn from his people, cannot but remain for ever deeply graven on the memories of all who saw it; but the feeling which reigned on board the steamer was simply indescribable in words.

At barely 150 mètres distant from the passing vessel

there were drawn up on the shore the old Krupp guns, which a year before at Slivnitza had so stoutly kept the Servians at bay, and at this range they opened fire on the yacht, as if they would far sooner send her to the bottom, than allow her to carry away the Prince. Of those on board I had made the acquaintance of most in the field, and had seen them face with calm coolness the fire of the foe, and I am certain that there was not one among them but would gladly have exchanged this harmless saluting fire for the fire of the actual field of battle.

The Prince, during the harrowing scenes at Widdin, preserved an extraordinary calm, which was the more remarkable as being in complete contrast with the intense excitement under which he laboured at Sofia. But even the most intense emotion cannot last for ever; it reaches a culminating point at which it commences steadily to decrease. The moment of the Prince's deepest emotion was when, at Sofia, he broke it to his officers that, yielding to the pressure of Russia, he must lay down his crown and leave Bulgaria. When afterwards to this bitter resolve had succeeded the still bitterer execution, the Prince gradually regained his composure, and on leaving Widdin he was the calmest of us all. As the last of the batteries fired their farewell salutes, he uttered this *cri de cœur*, "Now at any rate the Russian Consul will not telegraph, that the Bulgarians have *driven* me away!"

We had left Bulgaria, but yet the demonstrations of sympathy were not at an end. As we approached the Rumanian shore at Kalafat, the loud continuous cheers of a crowd of human beings, covering a long stretch of

the bank, met us. Flags were waved and several bands played the strains of the "Djumi Maritza," while our steamer, in obedience to the Prince's orders, slackened speed and steamed along close to the shore, to enable him to return the greetings of the populace. A couple of steamers and several gaily dressed barges accompanied us for some distance, then gradually fell astern, and soon the towers of Kalafat and the minarets of Widdin were lost to our gaze.

Even when night had fallen and the banks of the Danube were shrouded in obscurity, we still heard, now from the Bulgarian, now from the Rumanian shore, loud cheers, and the frequent playing of bands. Nay, even after leaving the Bulgarian shore behind us, whenever we appeared passing either station or village, loud shouts of welcome reached our vessel from the *Servian* shore. It must indeed be a fatality, which caused the Prince everywhere to encounter a most universal sympathy, even where, as for example in *Servia*, he assuredly would not have looked for it. I say a "fatality," for the favour of public opinion has been bitterly enough thrown in his teeth.

It was past midnight when we sighted the lights of Turn-Severin, and shortly after 1 o'clock our boat was moored to the landing-stage. The getting together the baggage, the disembarking, the running to and fro from one ship to the other, made an impression somewhat analagous to that caused by a move from a house in which you have long dwelt, and on the adornment and arrangement of which you have lavished all your care and affection. Previous to landing the Prince and Prince Francis Joseph had changed their uniform for civilian

costumes, as had also the aide-de-camp, Captain Uwalieff, who intended to accompany the Prince to his home. Before quitting the ship, the Prince received on board some Rumanian officers, who had been deputed to welcome him in the name of the garrison to Rumanian ground, and to express to him the warm sympathy of the Rumanian army. The Prince then quitted the boat, followed by his suite, and repaired to the railway-station, there to await the arrival of the express. Between the landing-stage and the railway-station the streets were lined with Rumanian soldiery, who received the Prince with regal honours. In the waiting-room at the railway-station, which was completely filled with Bulgarians, an oppressive silence reigned. Every one spoke in undertones, and the general feeling was, "Oh, if only the departure was over!" The time which we had to wait seemed interminable, but at last the approach of the train was signalled. Prince Alexander rose and a three-fold cheer rent the air of the waiting-saloon. The Prince embraced those nearest to him, with his Ministers and officers, many of whom were unable to suppress their hot tears.

Alongside the platform stood the train ready to move off. Surrounded by those who had accompanied him, Prince Alexander and his brother stepped into the carriage which had been reserved for him. He remained standing at the open door while his gaze rested mournfully on the closely-packed crowd. A shrill whistle, and the engine was set in motion—for the last time the cry resounded, "*Hoch Fürst Alexander!*" and as the train steamed out of the station, the reply was borne back, "*Auf Wiedersehen!*"

* * * * *

At noon on the 9th September the Prince's yacht, "the Alexander," ran alongside the landing-stage at Widdin, having made the voyage as slowly as possible. The same persons were on board as had accompanied the Prince to Turn-Severin, and only Prince Alexander was wanting. On landing the flag was lowered half-mast, and the band played a dead march. "The Alexander" resembled a funeral-ship and those present bared their heads.

They well understood why they did so!

CHAPTER XV.

BULGARIA WITHOUT THE PRINCE.

A "Prince's Party"—The Opportunists—Russian diplomacy—The question of the military conspirators and Germany—Russification: the army will have none of it.

When I returned to Sofia from Turn-Severin, whither I had accompanied the Prince, I found a calmer mood prevailing, but no sort of idea of giving in to the wishes of Russia, still less her demands.

The often expressed dread that Russia, emboldened by Germany's support, would settle the question with the sword and carry out a military occupation of Bulgaria, had not yet been fulfilled. The Russians were rid of the Prince, but his adherents remained, and they seemed by no means prepared to lay down their arms. The counter-revolution had been the work of the army, and the country had accorded it a joyful, albeit quiet and passive, reception. Its result, as far as the masses were concerned, had been all that could be desired, and people thought they could then return to their customary avocations without being disturbed by demonstrations of any special character. Then came the second, or rather the third blow, the abdication of the Prince, and in presence of this fresh event, there raised its head, with a totally undreamed of force, a new movement in the Prince's favour. There arose a new party, which one may call the "Prince's Party," and which had as its programme, to put it briefly, *the non-recognition of the Prince's abdication*. It has been laughed at and derided

in Europe, but a majority of the Bulgarian Nation refused to acquiesce in the right thus summarily and unceremoniously to remove their Prince, and accordingly set themselves to bring about, with all the means at their disposal, his return to the throne. That this would be a task of difficulty, every Bulgarian allowed, but they would not believe in its impossibility; moreover they believed with childish *naïveté*, that, once Europe should be convinced of the justice of the Bulgarian cause, she would no longer place obstacles in their way. It is an exceedingly difficult, and almost always a profitless, task to attempt to expound the fact, that "Europe" takes her decisions on quite other grounds to those that commend themselves to innocent minds. Thus we had a "Battenberg Party" *quand-même*—with the Prince, without the Prince, against the Prince; and it is worth while considering of what elements it was composed.

First of all there were the officers and the army, who remained staunch to the Prince, and would consider him him as merely "on leave." Their reasons for this attitude may be summed up as follows:—The Prince had done everything for the army that lay in the power of man to do, his attitude towards it had been ever that of affection, and he had led it to victory and renown. If individual, nay if a pretty fair number of officers had succumbed to a long continued course of demoralisation, that was laid to the door of foreign and domestic influence. Against the foreign authors of our misfortunes, we can do nothing; but the domestic ones, the politicians, who by their selfish intrigues have undermined the respect for discipline and order in the army—they we wish to hang! If we come to grief in

the matter, so much the worse! With the Prince we have been despoiled of our fatherland, and if he comes not back, there remains nothing else for us, but to wander forth abroad, or to be shot.

European diplomacy might see with pleasure or the reverse—and for the most part it did so with very great *displeasure*—that it was a fact that a great portion of the Bulgarian Nation clung to the Prince with loyal love, and desired to have him back. On this point public opinion was quite unanimous; but if I have said, that there is a party, which desire to effect the Prince's return *at all costs*, and are deaf to all objections, it must also, in the interests of impartiality, be stated, that a second party has added the words, "if at all possible," to their programme. Should it become evident—so say these men—beyond the possibility of doubt, that all our efforts will be in vain to bring the Prince back, then in the interests of the country we must strive to, as far as possible, neutralise the misfortune that has overtaken us. This was the party of the *Opportunists*, a set of men who have often had the reproach of want of character hurled at them by Europe, whereas it was in reality a patriotic duty, in these severe straits not to forget the Country, and for her sake, if indeed the Prince could not be brought back, to save whatever there might still be remaining of independence to be saved. My personal opinion is that the complete development of the situation goes to shew, that, *without* the Prince, independence is lost. I grant at the same time that other views of this question are possible. Anyway it was clearly necessary, and demanded by the situation, that the very greatest caution should be used, and before everything else so to

direct Bulgarian policy, as to leave Russia no just ground for complaint. It would have been nothing short of an act of lunacy wantonly to have flown in the face of Russia in the circumstances that prevailed immediately subsequent to the departure of the Prince; it was necessary to wait and see how matters would turn out, whether more favourable conditions would not open, for the creation of which they were to strive. This was the policy of the Bulgarian Opportunists, among whom I count Stambuloff, and it appears to me that it was the wisest. *Gain time*; this was then the *mot d'ordre*, the carrying out of which was considerably facilitated by the fact that the country shewed every disposition to submit to the Regency, and that another very generally looked for contingency had *not* come to pass. It had been imagined that the departure of the Prince would have been the sign for all those numerous persons, who in Bulgaria as elsewhere trim their sails to the wind, to go over to the enemy's camp. This kind of apostacy, due to the baser workings of human nature, was however only noticed in a few individual cases, and indeed some, who had immediately on the Prince's abdication ostentatiously taken measures to go over to the Russians, had, on his departure, rather watered their wine, and with more of shrewdness than honesty returned to a waiting policy. More than this even had happened, for, among the Zankoffist Deputies, several had separated themselves from Zankoff, while they expressed themselves in most decided terms against the revolution that had been set on foot by their leader and the military conspirators. Zankoff was himself on the 11th September forced to allow that, "never has Prince Alexander had

at his back so numerous and compact a party in Bulgaria as to-day." Zankoff was guilty of no sort of exaggeration in this remark, and that matters really so stood, was evident from a comparison of the telegrams addressed to the Prince and those, couched in terms of abject submission, addressed to the Tzar, the former numbering many hundreds, while of the latter but three went to the Emperor of Russia.

With a view to being in a position to appreciate these demonstrations at their proper worth, we must not lose sight of the fact that Bulgarians had long been accustomed to regard Russia as a sort of higher Providence, and the Russian Tzar, if not as God, at any rate as standing next to the Almighty. As at the same time the dullest peasant in Bulgaria was aware of the quarrel between the Tzar and the Prince, if in spite of all this he sided with the party of the latter, it was all the more significant from the fact that, in the game they were playing against the Russian Party, the National Party seemed to be on the losing side. Moreover the Russians exerted every effort to eradicate all remembrance of the Prince, and to invest the White Tzar with the rights, which, according to their views, he had to the loyalty and submissiveness of the Bulgarian nation, or, shall we say, to its allegiance.

When M. Bogdanoff had attained his purpose and brought the conspiracy against the Prince to a successful issue, but had thereby too openly disclosed his hand, it was determined at St. Petersburg to get rid of the slave that had done his work, and in his place, as temporary Acting Consul-General, to send from Constantinople to Sofia Neklyudoff, the Secretary to the Embassy. He had

already arrived in Sofia some few days prior to the Prince's final departure, but it was not until after that event, that he actually entered on the personal discharge of his functions, and withal gave evidence of anything but the conciliatory disposition, with which rumour had credited him before his arrival. Already during the days immediately following the return of the Regents and Ministers from Turn-Severin, symptoms were not wanting, that Neklyudoff intended to pursue a policy of intimidation, for the carrying out of which a general complication of the situation seemed to offer the means best calculated to serve his ends. The reply returned to the question of the Regents, as to what it was, that Russia really wanted from Bulgaria, was, that she wished Bulgaria and those "actually in authority" to shew great Russia the love that was her due, and the still more indispensable obedience. Then would Russia be graciously pleased to look over what had happened (?) and once more extend her protection to the Bulgarians. Anything beyond general phrases of this description they could not extract from Neklyudoff; and soon the official Russian utterances began to assume the form of friendly advice or of angry menace, according as they emanated from Neklyudoff or the Widdin Consul, M. Kartzoff, who was for a time employed at the General Consulate. One's thoughts used to recur involuntarily to the two little figures of the cottage barometer, which in turn emerge, or stay inside, according to the weather. Was the weather fine, then Neklyudoff would appear and descant on the greatness of the Tzar and his love for the Bulgarians; was it bad weather, then would come Kartzoff and hurl his Panslavic thunderbolts at the stupid rabble, who would

not bow to the will of the Emperor. In a very few days however the fact must have become but too painfully evident, that this see-saw sort of game was decidedly not producing the desired impression on the Bulgarians; they were certainly perplexed and knew not, what it was that the Russians really required of them: but they nevertheless still wilfully persisted in their demand, that the Russians should state their wishes in *writing*, and at the same time should give, also in writing, a solemn assurance, that Russia would not tamper with the independence and freedom of the country; would renounce all ideas of a military occupation; and finally would formally recognise the union of East-Rumelia with Bulgaria. This however the Russians would not agree to, and once more the evil Kartzoff came to the fore, and declared that in Bulgaria there in reality existed no Government whatever, for Prince Alexander had certainly no right to nominate a Regency, and further that the Regents, Mutkuroff and Stambuloff, did not fulfil the well-defined requirement of the Constitution, that the Regents must be Ministers or ex-Ministers. In this case also a written declaration was not to be extracted from them; and in this matter the action of the Russians, in not irrevocably committing themselves to this position, was decidedly shrewd, for they were shortly to learn to their chagrin, that all the other Governments had unreservedly recognised the Regency.

Only on one single point did Neklyudoff overcome his repugnance to written correspondence, and that certainly was in a cause, which he had specially at heart, namely the release of the military conspirators. Neklyudoff had repeatedly raised this question verbally, but each time the Bulgarians had in their turn displayed

*what
did
Russia
require?*

the same repugnance to verbal, as he had to written communications. At length after much negotiation he thought it best to concede the point, and on the 19th September, for the first time after a long interval, there emanated from the Russian side a written document, in which they demanded with considerable asperity the cessation of the court-martial proceedings against Bendereff, Grueff and Co. "until passions had subsided." Any one who lived in Bulgaria during that period must allow that the country enjoyed a calmness, which was under the circumstances most remarkable, and that passions, if they existed, were at any rate kept in complete subjection. It would be perfectly bootless to advance proofs, that the real object Russia had in view was to shield those persons, "who had thought to render a service to the Emperor of Russia," from any punishment for their crime. The theory set up by M. Kartzoff in this behalf is very simple:—"The ruler of all Bulgarians is the Emperor of Russia; rebellion is only possible against him; Prince Alexander and his friends have revolted against him; thus they alone are rebels, and not those officers, who acted against these rebels." The reply of the Bulgarian Government was to the effect, that so far only the preliminary examination of the conspirators had been entered on; that thus a considerable period must in any case yet elapse before the court-martial could be held; and that accordingly they had no grounds for interfering with the regular course of military justice, any such action on their part being more-over rendered impossible by the Constitution of the land. The note wound up with the declaration, that the non-punishment of the conspirators would expose the

country to the gravest dangers. For several days following negotiations regarding this note passed between M. Neklyudoff and the Minister Nacevics, the final upshot of which was, that the Bulgarians altered a few expressions, which appeared offensive to the Russians, but for the rest the tenour remained the same.

At an earlier period Germany and Austria-Hungary had so far supported the steps adopted by Russia for securing the immunity of the criminals, as to endorse in the most emphatic manner the councils offered by the latter Power, and had protested against any executions. This time however Austria refused to interpose in any way between the conspirators and their fate, while Germany so far moderated the counsels previously given to the Bulgarian Government, as to recommend now the *postponement* of the executions until the arrival of General Kaulbars, which was shortly to follow. It is a painful task for a German to have to occupy himself with this interference of Germany in the administration of military justice in a foreign country, for, however much the question may be twisted and contorted, the fact ever remains, that Germany here pursued a policy, which stands out in the sharpest opposition to all her own traditions, monarchical as well as military. The Bulgarian military conspirators have not a shred of an extenuating circumstance on their side; they had more than merited the punishment of death for the crime against their Prince and "War-Lord;" and it must be Germany forsooth, who comes forward to assist them to evade both bullet and gallows! Certainly never has an act of Prince Bismarck's met with such universal condemnation, even amongst those who ordinarily are

went out of conviction to defend his policy. It was diametrically opposed to our German and military instincts, and hence it is certainly best, while it cannot be passed over in absolute silence, to say as little as is possible about this proceeding. That this interference on the part of Germany evoked from every Bulgarian patriot a painful astonishment mingled with incredulity, needs no prefacing. To the Bulgarian officers especially appeared the protection, which Germany extended to the military rebels, as an insoluble riddle. For the rest, they did not surrender the hope that the traitors would not escape the punishment due to their treachery, and this feeling in the army doubtless found its reaction on the Bulgarian Government, which to all pressure, brought to bear by Russia, opposed an obstinate *non possumus*.

On other occasions also the army shewed itself completely averse to any concessions to Russia. To the great chagrin of the Russian representative, almost every officer refused to attend divine service, as was the custom, on the name-day of the Tzar, while, on the other hand, on the anniversary of the Philippopolis Revolution every regiment sent telegrams to the Prince, in which they expressed unalterable loyalty and affection towards him. At the same time the army gave effect to two general orders, which the Prince had left behind as a legacy, and in which he ordered the burning of the colours of the Struma Regiment and those of the Cadets' Corps. The Russians sought by various excuses to hinder the burning, the real reason being that they were desirous of obviating the fresh stigma that would thus, in the harshest form, be cast on their and the military conspirators' common work. But the army remained firm! In the presence of the

mutineers, who were in custody, the colours of the Struma Regiment were burnt with great solemnity at Radomir, and those of the Cadets' Corps at the Bali-Effendi camp. This solemn act made so deep an impression on the men of the Struma Regiment, that, on the return march to Radomir, where their officers were prisoners, they attempted to overpower the men of the escort with a view to seizing those who had seduced them, and murdering them. It is almost a matter of regret, that this attempt was not successful.

In view of the dubious state of discipline, which, on account of the repeated violent changes, prevailed in the army, people were not without some apprehension, that the elements of disturbance might succeed in getting hold of some portions of the army; and with their aid make pronunciamientos, which would have ended in inducing the state of anarchy that was so eagerly longed for in certain quarters. Happily these fears remained unfulfilled. The Rumelian regiments quitted Sofia without any opposition, and proceeded quietly to their respective garrisons, being thoroughly convinced that the Regency would neither undertake nor admit anything opposed to the national interests. In like manner the entire country population submitted without the slightest difficulty to the new form of government which the Prince had set up, so that the Sobranye was able to meet at Sofia in perfect tranquillity. The state of siege was still maintained, but one was hardly aware of it.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SOBRANYE.

A congratulatory address from 200 Deputies to Prince Alexander—Removal of the Tzar's portrait from the Sobranye—Gadban Effendi takes the Tzar under his high protection—The proceedings open with cheers for Prince Alexander—A telegram to the Emperor of Russia, and the reply of the Chamber to the Regents' message—Noisy opposition—The State purchases the Prince's private possessions—Aspect of the Sobranye—Constitutional question.

On the 13th September the Sobranye was opened in state at Sofia, the Diplomatic Corps, with the exception of the Russian and German Representatives, being present at the ceremony. These facts were established by the absence of these officials:—that Russia was displeased with Bulgarian Government: that Germany was now, as before, acting hand in hand with Russia; that in the relations between Russia and Germany on the one side, and Austria-Hungary on the other, some sort of dislocation had crept in, the outward evidence of which was, that the Representative of Austria had taken part in an official ceremony, from which his Russian and German colleagues had intentionally kept aloof. Why Russia abstained was clear enough, for not only had the Bulgarian Government had the audacity repeatedly to exhibit a most out-spoken *penchant* for independence, but also, before the Sobranye assembled, the Deputies had committed, what was in the eyes of Russia, an abominable crime, for, as the Deputies began to arrive in Sofia, the active supporters of the Prince began privately to circulate a congratulatory address for the Prince's

name-day, the 11th September, which quickly received two hundred signatures, and was all ready for despatch on the day. It ran as follows:—

“The National Deputies, assembled in Sofia, on the name-day of your Highness implore Almighty God to grant you health and long life; deeply regret your absence from the beloved Fatherland; and heartily desire to see the Hero and the Defender of the Freedom and National Independence as soon as possible again in their midst. Long may you live for the glory, the honour, and the greatness of Bulgaria!”

When one remembers the hatred, which the Emperor Alexander nourished towards his namesake, it is easy to imagine the effect of this address in St. Petersburg, especially if it—a perfectly voluntary step and free from any sort of compulsion—be compared with the miserably attended and purely compulsory church-service, at which the *Te Deum* for the Emperor Alexander was celebrated.

In this private address the National Representatives had only given a foretaste of the black wickedness, which animated their souls; for, before they had made their formal entry into the session-hall, the Committee of the Chamber perpetrated a fresh misdeed. Over the throne hung on the right the life-size portrait of the Prince, and on the left the busts of the last two Russian Emperors. Instead now of the portrait of the Prince being removed, and being replaced by some such as Katkoff's,* it had been veiled with a blue curtain, while those of the two Russian Emperors had been banished from the hall. Here was a sign of the temper of the Bulgarians not wholly without significance, and the Russians would have been

* The well-known editor of the “Moscow Gazette.”—*Trans.*

deeply mortified at it, indeed would probably have considered it a just cause for serious complaint, had not Gadban Effendi, the Turkish Representative in Sofia, sprinkled on their wounds a soothing balm. This excellent fellow Gadban Effendi, one of the most effective humourists of our time, conceived the splendid notion of taking the two Russian Emperors under his protection against the infamy that had been practised on them, and of making representations to the Bulgarians on the impropriety of their conduct. But even such high protection was of no avail against the evil disposition of the Bulgarians, and Gadban Effendi had to endure the final pain of hearing bad men aver, that he was quite unconscious of the fine irony of his act, never dreaming of the intense amusement it would create. Let Gadban Effendi console himself; there are statesmen whom no one will take seriously; why then, on the other hand, may it not happen that some one is taken seriously, when as a matter of fact, he only wishes to make a good joke?

While the Deputies had behaved in such an exceedingly unpromising manner even before the actual meeting of the Chamber had taken place, the real bad time was yet to come when they entered the session-hall. First of all appeared the Regents Stambuloff, Karaveloff and Mutkuroff with a large military following, and Stambuloff read in a loud voice the Regents' message, in which the Representatives of the Nation were informed, that the Regents had summoned them with a view to claiming their co-operation towards introducing some order into the state of confusion in which public affairs at present found themselves. They expressed the hope

that all parties would unselfishly afford them their support, and announced the presentation of several important bills. The speech concluded with a cheer for Bulgaria, after which the Regents with their military following retired. The Chamber ought now properly to have proceeded with the nomination of the committee, but first of all rose the Deputy Vatcheff, a doctor of the Heidelberg University, and in an inflammatory speech proposed *a cheer for Prince Alexander*, in which the whole Chamber together with the tribunes enthusiastically joined. Some portions of this speech, where he spoke of the gratitude which Bulgaria owed the Prince for the victorious defence of the fatherland, and in which he branded the traitors as abominable criminals, were interrupted with loud plaudits, in opposition to which even the Russian Party did not venture the slightest demonstration. Thereupon the election of the President was proceeded with, 178 votes being recorded in favour of the National candidate Shifkoff, the Russian candidate Suknaroff receiving only 16. After this fresh defeat of the Russian Party the sitting was adjourned, in order to give the Chamber time to consult in private meetings on the wording of the reply to the Regents' message.

On the following day, the 14th September, the draft of a telegram was submitted to the Chamber, which, as had ordinarily been the case on the opening of the Sobranye, it was proposed to send to the Emperor of Russia. This telegram declared the devotion of the Bulgarians towards the Tzar, and expressed a hope for the restoration of good relations with Russia, and that Russia would guarantee the union, freedom and independence of all branches of the Bulgarian Nation.

This proposal, which took the Assembly completely by surprise, had been brought forward under such severe pressure from the Russians, that the Government had deemed it impossible to evade it. The Deputies however took another view, and the Deputy, Sakhary Stoyanoff, who had ever displayed a restless activity in the cause of independence, declared to the President, that a formidable row would be the result, if this telegram were submitted for debate. The President, who was alarmed at the prospect of a scene, saw no other remedy but to close the sitting. For another twenty-four hours the matter was discussed by day and night in private meetings, and Stambuloff especially used every endeavour to get the telegram accepted. Eventually, thanks to his preponderating influence in the Chamber, he was successful, but at the same time the draft of a reply to the Regents' message was unanimously agreed to, which breathed a wholly different spirit. On the 16th September both drafts, the submissive telegram to the Tzar and the following reply to the Regents' message, were agreed to:—

“The Representatives of the Nation consider it their duty towards the Fatherland to brand as a crime against the honour and independence of Bulgaria, and against the crown of our beloved Prince Alexander, the abominable outrage, which was perpetrated on the 21st August by some evil persons, who had been led astray, and to assure the Prince of the abhorrence with which the Nation views the dastardly deed. This crime compelled the Bulgarian population to rise, along with the army, for the purpose of defending the honour and independence of the crown of Bulgaria, to restore order

according to law, and at the same time to demand of the Government the severest punishment of the authors of this criminal deed. The Bulgarian People cannot find words sufficient to give expression to their admiration for the unexampled patriotic self-abnegation of Prince Alexander, who resigned the throne in order to assure the independence, the freedom, and the rights of our State, and to restore good relations between Russia and Bulgaria. The Representatives of the Nation have the firm hope, that, after this immeasurable sacrifice, these good relations will be fully and completely restored. We are fully convinced, that all Bulgarian citizens will, in presence of the great danger with which the Fatherland is threatened, rally round the Government, and afford it the necessary aid for assuring peace and security in the interior, and thus enable our State to pass through the present crisis unscathed. The Representatives of the Nation express to the Regents and the Government their gratitude for the measures taken by them for the security of the peace and tranquillity of the country, as also for the intended summoning, with the least possible delay, of the National Assembly, which, in accordance with the Constitution, has to elect a Prince for the vacant throne. The Chamber will carefully examine and discuss the measures laid before it by the Government. It gives us pleasure to be able to declare, that we repose the fullest confidence in the Government, and we hope that they will by their wisdom and intelligence and energy be able to secure and protect the interests of the Fatherland. Long live Bulgaria!"

That these two resolutions display an extraordinary absence of consistency, no one can possibly deny. It is

simply impossible to bring into harmony with each other the assurances of devotion towards the Emperor and the merciless reprobation of the Imperial work, and it would be a vain task to attempt to prove, that the Bulgarian representatives had in these resolutions really grasped the situation. The most we can do is to shew how the Bulgarians themselves viewed the matter, and then we shall find that they deemed the telegram a pure formality, while the reply to the Regents' message was the expression of their real opinion. Of course the pressure brought to bear by the Government had had something to say to it, for it was a matter of primary importance to gain time, and not for the present at least irrevocably to break with Russia. As the Russians were themselves also anxious for the moment to meet the wishes of the Bulgarians in this matter, Neklyudoff received the deputation fairly graciously, which, on the 17th September, handed over to him, for transmission to the Emperor, the telegram, and forbore to touch on the contradiction subsisting between the two simultaneous resolutions of the Chamber.

Since Russia—he in effect said—laid the greatest stress on the maintenance of tranquillity and order in Bulgaria, she could never for an instant think of the return of the Prince, whose departure constituted in the eyes of the Imperial Government one of the guarantees for the welfare of the country. The Bulgarians must remember, that the present order of things had not met with the approbation of the Imperial Government, and that Russia expected wisdom and moderation from them.

This speech failed to produce any great effect on

the Bulgarians, for when in the evening a parliamentary banquet was held in honour of the Philippopolis Revolution, a number of speeches were delivered on the freedom and independence of Bulgaria, and amidst all the toasts not a single one was offered to the health of the Tzar, a sin of omission which later was made the subject of bitter reproach to M. Stambuloff.

Besides a law relating to the state of siege, a finance measure, and some unimportant motions, the Assembly had to consider a scheme, the object of which was to settle the financial affairs of Prince Alexander, the State purchasing his estates and other personal property. The Government had proposed for this purpose the sum of $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions,* and it cannot but be said, that, in this matter, the Deputies behaved with very great delicacy, and in spite of their usual parsimony, completely discarded all ideas of traffic and bargaining. Had the Government instead of $2\frac{1}{2}$ millions proposed 4 millions, this sum would also have been unhesitatingly granted. It is true that the Bulgarians could not decorously have done less for the Prince, but nevertheless the quick, willing and unanimous consent deserves acknowledgment. The debate on this bill was the first occasion on which I learnt that the Bulgarian Chamber was susceptible of emotion. When an orator was disposed to cavil at the sum voted, the entire Chamber rose against him *en masse*, and the "honourable member" was near receiving a sound cudgelling. I am far from wishing to designate this passing relapse into unparliamentary manners as praiseworthy; that it was precisely however on this occasion that it broke out, appears to me a not inglorious sign of

* Francs are probably meant = £100,000.—*Trans.*

the temper of the Chamber. Generally, now that I myself have had an opportunity of seeing the Bulgarian Chamber of Deputies, which is abroad pretty well discredited, at work, I must openly say, that it has not on the whole given me the bad impression which I had anticipated. The exterior impression is naturally quite other than that which one receives from a European parliament; if we figure to ourselves however that Bulgaria is in truth a peasant-State, we shall not then take it amiss of her, that she returned a large number of peasants as her National Representatives, who took their seats on the benches in the Chamber in the same clothes in which they followed the plough. It would have commended itself to those who admire class representation in parliament, and at least it contributed to impart to the Assembly a more variegated appearance than we are wont to see in European parliaments. No one would exactly say, that the Assembly on the whole produced an impression of great intelligence; and if the Bulgarian Constitution had reached the highest point to which upholders of national liberty could aspire, yet it appears to have been much in advance of the political education of the Deputies. At the same time it cannot be denied that many of them made a really advantageous impression, and that among these there were some too who wore the peasant garb. What more than anything else astonished me, was the facility, with which the Deputies adapted themselves to parliamentary discipline, and a President of the German Reichstag or indeed the French Chamber, who had been at a sitting of his Bulgarian colleagues, might not improbably exclaim, "The barbarians are the better men!" During the sittings, at which I have been present,

there reigned an exemplary order, and, I might almost say, the stillness of a church. Interruptions and disturbances hardly ever occurred, applause was only manifested in a modest manner, and the conduct of the proceedings was for the President merely child's play. I have, *inter alia*, remarked that the Bulgarian parliamentary orator in one point stands far above his European colleagues, viz. in the *great brevity* of his speeches, and if an orator speaks for fifteen minutes that is quite an exception. This cannot be attributed to any want of ability on the part of the Bulgarians; they on the contrary speak with much adroitness, and even the peasants mount the tribune without the least sign of hesitation. Apparently however the "power of talk" has not yet gained sufficient ground in these far-off regions to ripen into hour-lasting speeches. When will this be the case again with us in Europe?

In Europe the general opinion is, that, in the interests of Bulgaria, it would be best to abrogate the whole Constitution, and to govern the country in a more or less absolute manner. Now although I too consider, that Bulgaria is not ripe for the Constitution under its present form, yet I should hesitate very considerably before advising its abrogation. Liberty has been measured out with too liberal a hand to the nation, without any sort of preparation such as that afforded by a transitionary period, and if this has resulted in many disadvantages, it is on the other hand incontestable, that in the nation, under the influence of this freedom, such a surprisingly rapid development has taken place, that it is impossible not to ascribe this in part to the free form of government. The whole question is one of

extreme difficulty, and I believe it can alone be really solved in a manner compatible with the true interests of the country—provided always that Bulgaria remains an independent State—if, instead of determinedly embracing one view or the other, the solution be sought for in a calm, sensible *reform* of the Constitution.

Of course in the advent of the Russians, the discussion of this question would be wholly objectless.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE INVESTIGATION.

Statements of Bendereff and Grueff—Nikiforoff, Tzanoff and Karaveloff accused—Bendereff and Grueff declare that they had feared a war with Servia.—Negotiations through Tzanoff with the Russian Consul.

In spite of the protests of Russia, the trial of the officers accused of high treason had been proceeded with; but, though bringing many new things to light, had in a large number of cases failed to establish full complicity. I have personally been at great pains to collect in individual cases the most reliable information, on which to ground a decided opinion, one way or the other, as to their guilt or innocence, specially regarding Karaveloff, Nikiforoff, and Tzanoff, only however with very partial success. Often I believed in their guilt, then in their innocence, and then again in their criminal connivance, or disposition, whether prompted by carelessness, weakness or fear, to let things take their course. In presenting to the reader the following depositions of Bendereff and Grueff, I am actuated by a desire to place him in such a position, that he may be enabled to form an opinion for himself. There are two facts however which must not be lost sight of for an instant in this connection. In the first place it was no doubt greatly to the interest of these two men, who were looked on as the ringleaders, as far as possible to implicate prominent personages, and this will be in itself sufficient seriously to detract from the credibility of their statements. Secondly, the resignation of the Prince had already for

some time past formed a topic of general conversation. The question was asked on every side, whether he would be able to stand against the ill-will of Russia, and, in the discussions that ensued, the question of his resignation, and the probable consequences for Bulgaria, formed the subject of academical debate. Such discussions were not looked upon, even by undoubted friends of the Prince, as being in any way surprising or suspicious, and hence the question has often occurred to me, whether certain enunciations of the conspirators might not possibly have been accepted by other persons as merely academic views, and *vice versa*.

I commence with the deposition made by Bendereff on the occasion of his examination on the 1st September at Tirnova :—

“Early in May on my return from Tirnova from leave, I learnt for the first time, in the course of a friendly conversation that I had with Captain Radko Dimitrieff, that a considerable number of Bulgarian officers were dissatisfied with the foreign and home policy of His Highness, Dimitrieff adding that he feared disturbances both in the army and amongst the population of East-Rumelia. As I had often previously heard many persons, both military and civil, express their dissatisfaction with His Highness, I at first paid no special attention to Captain Dimitrieff's words. Nevertheless I considered it my duty to inform my chief, the War Minister Nikiforoff, about it. He appeared to attach no importance to my information. During an interview, which I had with the War Minister about two or three weeks prior to the catastrophe, at the very time that I had myself determined to join in deposing the Prince, I learnt the discontent amongst the officers had

already formed the subject of conversation amongst the Ministry, the result of their deliberations being, that it was impossible to take drastic measures against the officers, in view of the discredit that would attach to the Government. I cannot quite remember, but I have a kind of recollection, that the same day the War Minister in a private conversation with me let out, that the opinion even of the Government was, that the sole means for remedying the situation lay in the deposition of the Prince. Hence immediate action was considered advisable, but the deposition, it was considered, should not be the work of the army, but should be brought about in some other manner. This conversation convinced me that the deposition of the Prince was unavoidable, and I determined myself to take part in it."

At this point Bendereff commences a long exposition of the motives, that induced him to join the revolution. In the first place he lays it down as an axiom, that a fresh war with Servia was to be avoided at all costs, for Bulgaria was not at that time in a position to carry out a successful combat. As long as the Prince remained on the throne, Russia would refuse all support. Generally speaking, a policy, which did not aim at the closest union with Russia, was unnatural, and without the aid of Russia the liberation of Macedonia was not to be thought of. The Prince had won the personal sympathy of every officer, yet many were dissatisfied with his policy. The War Minister had been cognizant of the various preparatory measures, but had remained undecided and hesitating. In this connection Bendereff says:—

"The reports from the Struma Regiment came in earlier than I had expected. It was in August. I

myself was quite bewildered with the rapidity of events. I will remark *en passant*, that in the interval between taking my own decision and the 15th August, I had several conversations with the Minister, in which I persuaded him that the army was the safest means to employ, for the very reason that His Highness placed such absolute reliance on it. His reply to me was most undecided, his hesitation and wavering being very apparent; now he threatened, then again he would counsel patience; once he even declared that the Ministry would advise His Highness to renounce the throne of Bulgaria. In general it was evident, that he was opposed to the deposition of the Prince by means of the army; but he yielded in front of the fact, that the ground had been too far prepared in the army now to hold back. At the same time I learnt that the Minister Tzanoff had entered into negotiations with the Russian Consul as to the guarantees that Russia would be willing to give in the event of His Highness being dethroned; and that he had been informed that the Russian Government would never permit any external interference with our affairs, and guaranteed the integrity of our united Fatherland. Before my departure for Pernik to join the Struma Regiment I desired to confer personally with Karaveloff, and, should the regiment really shew itself ready, to order it in the name of the Government to march by night. I had informed three military men of my intentions, and had also imparted to them that I was an accomplice in the affair. The result of my interview with Karaveloff was not favourable to the cause. On that day he expressed himself, that the whole matter was a Russian intrigue,

and that he dreaded disturbances, which Russia would turn to her own account. The Ministers Tzanoff and Nikiforoff were also present at this interview. All three besought me to wait two or three days more until the results of the Gastein and Kissingen meetings should be known. I deferred to their wishes, and on joining the Struma Regiment, I was careful to explain that it was too early and that we must wait a few days more. I promised the officers, that, the moment I received instructions from the Government, I would send telegraphic orders to the regiment. That was on Saturday, the 15th August. On returning to Sofia, I found that the officers of the garrison, who were in the plot, had held themselves the whole night in readiness to join the Struma Regiment; they were much annoyed with me and the Government, and insisted on my ordering the Regiment to Sofia the next day by telegraph. I did as they required, but, instead of the Regiment coming, Captain Geneff alone arrived, in order to convince himself whether the Government was really aware of the position of affairs, and was agreeable to the deposition. Moreover he wished to find out what officers and troops of the Sofia garrison had joined the undertaking. I drove Captain Geneff to Tzanoff's at Bali-Effendi (a place near Sofia), whither I had myself proceeded to receive the regiment. Tzanoff declared that the deposition was indispensable and unavoidable, but that there were other methods by which it could be brought about, and no violent measures should be adopted. I thereupon sent the Captain to Sofia, in order that he might himself learn the views of the officers of the garrison. I accompanied him as far as the Cadets' camp, where we separated."

At a later hearing (13th September) Bendereff made the following statements :—

“At 7 a.m. on the 14th August I had a private interview with Captain Slatarski. He told me that he knew everything and had also informed Captain Gerginoff and Lieutenant Kojtcheff, who had given their assent. Slatarski however omitted to tell me from whom *he* had learnt it all. I am equally in ignorance from whom it was that Major Stoyanoff had first heard of it. Captain Radko Dimitrieff told me that the Struma Regiment was won over to our side. On the 19th August we were assembled in the afternoon at Major Nikiforoff's. There were present I, Captain Mititeloff, Major Vankoff, Major Grueff, Nikiforoff and Captain R. Dimitrieff. The subjects of our discussion were the imminent war with Servia, the necessity of the Prince's removal, and the measures to be adopted for that object. We were confirmed in our views by a telegram that had just been received from the Prefect of Trn, but took no decisive step as Nikiforoff had promised to consult Karaveloff on the subject. I think he must have spoken with Karaveloff, for the next day he said to me that a deputation, which was to have been sent to the Struma Regiment, must be recalled. I am unaware whether it was settled, that, during the fusillade, Nikiforoff was to go to Karaveloff. He has however himself told me, that, during the events of the night at, and in the vicinity of, the palace, he was with Karaveloff, and that he had at one time discussed with him the possible non-success of the venture.”—(In answer to questions): “The Russian Military-Attaché Sakharoff told me twenty days before the revolution, that Tzanoff was in communication with the Russian

Consulate regarding the deposition of the Prince. This decided me to take an active part in the affair, all of which I reported to the War Minister, the more so as Major Nikiforoff had himself assured me, that the Government were in sympathy with Tzanoff's negotiations. The only explanation I can give of the conduct of Nikiforoff is his natural weakness of character, the more so on account of the very great influence that Karaveloff exercised over him. I besought several friends to let Karaveloff know, that, as it was his régime that had impelled us to this step, should he refuse to take over the government, I would shoot both him and myself."

From other statements made by Bendereff, it is further to be remarked, that he allows that, at the time of his flight, he was furnished with a Russian passport. For the rest he maintains, that, on the 21st August at Karaveloff's, at the instance of the latter, it was decided to hurry the Prince across the frontier as rapidly as possible. This statement is strikingly in agreement with that of Grueff, but it must be remembered that, by some incomprehensible folly, these two prisoners had not been separated, and they were thus able to preconcent their statements to the minutest details.

Of Grueff's statement at Tirnova on the 1st September, the following points may be noticed :—He had first heard of the business on the meeting at Constantinople of the Commissioners for the revision of the East-Rumelian Organic Statute. At that time Bendereff and Nikiforoff had told him that, "in view of the difficulties of the situation, the Ministry were discussing the question as to the ways and means for dethroning the Prince." Grueff

also is at great pains to induce the belief that he really did fear a war with Serbia, and that he was entirely ignorant of the fact, that all the reports regarding Servian armaments were preconcerted and absolutely devoid of foundation. He equally denies having discussed the plan with any member of the Russian Agency. These negotiations were, as far as he knew, carried on exclusively by the Minister, Tzanoff, who, he had always believed, acted in complete accord with his colleagues. The officers had never been anything more than tools, and they had been won over, the choice being offered to them between a ruined Bulgaria *with* the Prince, and a prosperous Bulgaria *without* the Prince. He, Grueff, had acted solely from love to the Fatherland, and from no other motive. To this he added the following, from a psychological point of view, curious words, "I shall meet death with head erect and a clear conscience. Against His Highness personally I have never had anything, for he has always treated me very well. I held a high position, was ever received in a distinguished manner, and was deemed worthy of His Highness's special notice." With this statement must also be compared, what Grueff states he said, in Karaveloff's presence, at Nikiforoff's, on the 15th August regarding the participation of the cadets. "I did not wish"—in the words of the statement—"to let the cadets take any part, for I looked on them as children, and dreaded the demoralising influence of such a deed. Nikiforoff and Karaveloff held the same opinion."

Worthy of notice perhaps is the account Grueff gives of his visit on the 15th August to Madame Karaveloff. He had been speaking about the imminent war with Serbia, and had calculated that the Servians could reach

Sofia in three days. The blame for this catastrophe would fall on Karaveloff and at least half-a-dozen officers would be forthcoming, who would shoot him and "I shall be the first of them!" Madame Karaveloff, bursting into tears at these threats, was requested to inform her husband. This visit of Grueff's finds a fitting complement in an interview, which he had with Nikiforoff on the 18th August at the latter's residence. Nikiforoff upbraided Grueff with having put Madame Karaveloff in a fright. To Grueff's question of, "Why the deposition of the Prince, which was acknowledged to offer the only and sole means of exit from the dangerous situation, seemed to be as yet no nearer execution?" Nikiforoff replied, that "the sole obstacle was Karaveloff's irresolution." At 9 o'clock that evening Karaveloff himself appeared, and I begged his pardon for what I had said to his wife. Karaveloff told me that his wife had said nothing to him about it, and when I thereupon recounted to him the general drift of the interview, he cried, "Well, murder me then, if you wish!" Karaveloff stayed till one o'clock the next morning, and the means were discussed for obviating the threatened catastrophe of a Servian war. The military measures, which had already, with a view to the revolution, been adopted, were also discussed. Karaveloff then expressed the opinion that "such an act could never be capable of justification, and that European public opinion would be violently excited against Bulgaria."

Regarding the subsequent part of the conversation, Grueff states:—

"When I had explained to Karaveloff that a large number of officers had been gained over to the enterprise,

both of them (Karaveloff and Nikiforoff) declared to me, that the deposition must be carried out in the following manner: the Ministry would lay before the Prince a carefully drawn up report, in which the various points should be cited, which had induced the Ministry to request the Prince voluntarily to resign. In the event of the Prince's refusal, there would yet be time to have recourse to the aid of the army. On my representing to Karaveloff, that a large number of officers, who had been initiated into the affair, would run serious risk of losing their heads, should anything become known, Karaveloff replied, "Wait three days, till I have settled the conditions for the loan, and concluded the preliminary negotiations with the Turkish Commissioner." I replied, "So you said before to Captain Bendereff, that you required a respite of five days, before declaring one way or the other. How can I tell, whether, at the end of three days, you will repeat the same game? You see however that we have staked our positions and lives on the game, for, as you are aware, there are in the army officers, who, under all circumstances, would sooner act for His Highness than for Bulgaria, which has consequently been brought to ruin. There are many such officers in the Alexander Regiment, and if they learn what is being planned, we shall have to take the consequences." Karaveloff departed, but I stayed the night at Nikiforoff's, who characterised Karaveloff's conduct with the words, "He is undecided and without energy—that is true, but we must wait." He then told me that the Austrian Agent had just informed him, that the Servian war preparations were a pure fiction. "On the other hand, however, our frontier officials and secret

agents place the situation in such a light, that I am in absolute despair, and can neither work nor sleep in peace."

In the further course of the investigation Grueff recounts that several officers came to him, and it was decided to send a deputation of three officers to the Struma Regiment. On the 20th August this deputation, consisting of Grueff, Captain Slatarski of the Artillery, and Captain Radko Dimitrieff of the War Office, reached the quarters of Major Stoyanoff at Pernik. There amongst other officers was the Captain of Engineers, Vasoff, who had taken a very active part in the plot. Stoyanoff declared that he was quite prepared to march with his regiment against the Prince, but that he had not yet spoken to all the officers on the subject; he would however at once summon them and impart the plan to them. On their assembly, Grueff delivered an address to them. Having briefly described the situation, and the views he had formed regarding it, he continued:—

"Is there any one among you, who still hesitates? Such a one I could not but view as a traitor to the Fatherland—this Fatherland, that is standing on the brink of a precipice, and to save which, if we do not at once interfere, the guilt will be ours. Is there any one amongst you, who believes, that this enterprise is the result of merely private self-seeking and ambitious views? Now I am filling a post, of which but a short time since I could not even have dreamed. A Minister I have no wish to be, and, I say it openly, I do not consider myself fitted for such a post. My salary is nearly equal to that of a Minister. Finally, I ask you to believe that I am speaking in the name of the Government. I am personally

acquainted with the members of the Cabinet, and can assure you that they are one and all in despair at the critical situation of Bulgaria. The present Minister for War has been my comrade from childhood, and I may tell you, that he would himself have visited the various portions of the army, in order to lay the position of affairs clearly before you, had it been possible. Place yourselves however in his position. He is Minister for War, and it is impossible but that his personal interference in such a matter should become known. But should the enterprise be prematurely betrayed, who could answer for the bloody consequences. Therefore, gentlemen, I beg those, who still hesitate, at once to step forward and to declare it."

Not one of the officers raised an objection. After Grueff had narrated the details of the plan for the seizure of the Prince, he replied as follows to various questions addressed to him.

"I spoke of this plan to no other civilian but Karaveloff. I am aware that the Ministerial Council had in full conclave discussed the question on more than one occasion. The Minister Tzanoff alone took any active share in the negotiations with the Russian Agency. The rest of the Ministry have, as far as I know, had no dealings with the Russians. The instructions for the officers escorting the Prince, were drawn up by Captain Bendereff and handed to the officers. I countersigned them as the senior officer of the garrison and Commander-in-Chief."

Grueff declared subsequently, that, at the time of his flight from Sofia, he had received through Bendereff a Russian passport. He denies in the most positive manner

ever having spoken of his plan to any Russian agent before the deposition took place. His account of the political events was as follows:—

“All the members of the Provisional Government had been named by me in conjunction with Captain Bendereff, without being asked their consent. My belief was that the Karaveloff Ministry, with whose connivance the revolution had been effected, would not refuse to continue the government of the country. I was also firmly persuaded, that those persons, who had been nominated members of the Provisional Government, and who were the most influential representatives of their parties, would accept office, although they had not been perfectly instructed as to all the reasons for dethroning the Prince. Time has however proved that I was mistaken in my supposition. Thus Karaveloff as early as the morning of the 21st August decidedly refused, in common with all his colleagues, to remain in office, or to enter the new Government. I received an equally decided refusal from the President, Stambuloff, which was followed later by the refusals of the Conservatives, Grekoff, Stoiloff, etc. The invitation, which I renewed several times to Karaveloff, was as often rejected. I went personally several times to Karaveloff, to entreat him to speak with Stambuloff at the telegraph-office, to inform him of the *fait accompli*, as well as to consult with him on the formation of a new Government, and the steps to be taken for preserving tranquillity. Karaveloff would not consent. * * * * As soon as Nikiforoff learnt that he had been nominated War Minister in the new Government, he protested in the most decided manner against it, and demanded the

erasure of his name, and that the whole country might be informed, that his name had been placed on the list without his consent." * * * *

At a later hearing, on the 13th September, Grueff repeated his former statements, adding the following:—

"I remember that Karaveloff, (it might be one or two days after the deportation of the Prince) imparted to me his absolute disbelief in the possibility of the Prince's return. He then asked me whether His Highness had already been placed across the frontier. On my returning a negative answer, Karaveloff said, "Why do you still keep him? Look to it, that he is placed across the frontier as speedily as possible."

The above are the most important of the statements made during the investigation.

CHAPTER XVIII.

KAULBARS AT SOFIA

The former exploits of Kaulbars in Bulgaria—His welcome by a Tzech and a Finnish woman—"The Regents and Ministers are vagabonds and rascals"—The "three points" and the "twelve points"—The question of the officers and its possible breadth of application—Rebels and Nihilists—"His Majesty, the Emperor, knows the Bulgarian law better than the Bulgarians"—The Bulgarians refuse obedience, and Kaulbars tries to excite revolts—The Macedonians and Babadjan—Kaulbars as a demagogue—Kaulbars meets with a fearful reverse, but is quite content—Journey abroad to discover the true people.

On the 15th September the Bulgarian Government received the intelligence, that Major-General Kaulbars, the Russian Military-Attaché at Vienna, had been appointed Diplomatic Agent at Sofia, and had gone to Poland to meet the Emperor, who was engaged there with the manœuvres, to receive his instructions. *Until* his arrival the Diplomatic Agents had to feed on hope; *from* his arrival the Zankoffists promised themselves wonders; and *after* his arrival the Government Party hoped to learn finally, how they stood with Russia. Kaulbars was not unknown in Bulgaria, for he had five years previously concluded the, for Bulgaria highly unfavourable, military convention with Russia; and later, as member of the Military Commission at Pirot, had induced Prince Alexander to draw up a general order, based on entirely erroneous premises. That no good was to be expected of him, all were aware; opinions only differed as to whether he would attempt to gain his ends

through mildness and conciliation, or reckless brutality. To such, as did not know Bulgaria, either mode might seem effective, and this was perhaps the view of the Russians, who have ever shown themselves the least acquainted with the country, which forms the very keystone of their oriental policy. Those however, who knew Bulgaria and the Bulgarians, in proportion as they were animated with hostility to Russian policy, dreaded nothing more than that the Russian Envoy should comport himself in an amiable, conciliatory, and friendly manner, their deepest wish being that Russia might send a regular reckless and brutal Representative, who would pursue towards the Bulgarians the methods in vogue in Central Asia.

Any way the feeling of suspense in Sofia was intense, when, on the 24th September, General Kaulbars placed his foot on Bulgarian soil. The General-Consulate made the greatest preparations for his reception, and the entire levy of the Russian party was requested to proceed to a *khan*, on the road from Sofia, to meet the General. The General-Consulate very wisely hired carriages at its own expense, for otherwise the danger of a more than sorry attendance would have confronted them. As it was the twenty-five hired carriages would not fill, and M. Neklyudoff must have been thankful to be able to meet the Tzar's Envoy with as many as the twenty-three carriages, which sufficed to contain the entire Russian Party. With the other preparations it had fared even worse, in spite of the efforts of Colonel Sakharoff, who had moved heaven and earth to induce as large a number of Bulgarian officers as possible to ride out to welcome the General. Those officers, to whom he had spoken on

the subject privately, replied that they felt no sort of inducement to participate in such a welcome, and the War Office, to which Sakharoff likewise applied, answered him with an order of the day, strictly forbidding any officer to take part in the proposed ceremonious procession. All attempts at a display of flags or getting together an enthusiastic crowd, were similarly abandoned, the leaders of the Russian Party having, during a nocturnal meeting, come to the conclusion, that any public demonstration in favour of Kaulbars would only evoke a ten-fold stronger counter-demonstration. Thus the position *before* Kaulbars' arrival assumed in the eyes of the Russophiles a by no means favourable aspect. They however solaced themselves with the hope, that *after* his arrival it would of necessity be quite otherwise.

How far these anticipations were realised, the following pages will shew. To commence with, the first act of Kaulbars was full of promise for the future, differing however in every respect from the usual customs of diplomacy. This consisted in his at once honouring the motley company, who had driven out to meet him, with a speech, in which he laid before them wherein consisted the gracious intentions of the Emperor. The primary objects of his coming were the liberation of the unhappy officers in captivity, the raising of the state of siege, and thus the assurance of freedom in the elections. This information he addressed to the assembly in general and to the brewer, Proschek, in particular, this pillar of the Tzech Party having also gone to welcome him. This, the first action of Kaulbars, was the cause of some head-shaking in Sofia. In the first place it was considered contrary to custom to make important declarations of

this description not to the Government, but in the public streets. Secondly it was considered a want of tact on Kaulbars' part to choose, as the agent for publishing Imperial decisions, a man in the position of Proschek, an Austrian subject, for whose apprehension for desertion there was a warrant out in Austria. In other ways too, Kaulbars, on this his first day, met with no sort of success, for he had in addition to endure the speech of a Finnish woman, married to a Bulgarian, who assured him, that, with the sole exception of the Regents, who were vagabonds and rascals, every Bulgarian loved Russia from the bottom of his heart. Kaulbars considered that he could not better utilise the opportunity offered for the cementing of pleasant personal relations with the Regents and Ministers, than by replying to the orator that he should take account of her words as those of a Bulgarian (she was a Finn!) woman.

On the evening of the 25th September after his first essay, Kaulbars entered Sofia and of course his effusions were within an hour known all over the city. At first people were unwilling to believe that Kaulbars' words had been correctly reported, but the next day it was no longer possible to deny the fact that the occupants of the twenty-three carriages had really heard him correctly; for, in the course of an official interview with the Regents and Ministers, Kaulbars repeated exactly the tenour of his speech to the people of the previous day, and accompanied it with explanatory, though anything but pleasant remarks. It was clearly evident that the question of the officers held a paramount place in his mind. They must be at once set at liberty, and that unconditionally, for the present Government was only a Party Govern-

ment, and hence was not in a position to pass sentence on the members of another Party. Thus the Emperor willed it, and the Bulgarians would know now what they had to do. A Minister having ventured the question, as to whether Kaulbars approved of a conspiracy of officers against the sovereign, the latter could not but reply, that the officers had for ever dishonoured themselves by the plot, that they in fact could no longer continue in the service, but that their punishment was inadmissible. As regards the elections, they would have to be postponed, for in the present excited condition of men's minds their quiet progress could not be reckoned on. Further, the state of siege must be raised, as under its cloak the dominant Party persecuted and oppressed the other Party.

These demands excited universal astonishment and universal indignation, but with the recollection of Kartzoff's policy of intimidation, people hesitated at first to believe that they were really meant. The Russians had so often made use of verbal menaces, and their verbal communications had proved so unreliable, that the Bulgarians no longer believed them, and accordingly requested Kaulbars to put his wishes on paper. As a matter of fact they never believed, that he would do so and were accordingly not a little astonished when, on the 27th September, a note was transmitted to M. Nacevics, which was to prove the starting point for the whole of the Kaulbar's agitation, and which, on account of its importance, I give here in the French text:—

Monsieur le Ministre !

Pour compléter ce que je Vous ai dit dans notre entretien d'hier et, d'ordre du Gouvernement Impérial,

j'ai l'honneur de Vous communiquer aujourd'hui que, dans la pensée de ce Gouvernement, la convocation de la Grande Assemblée Nationale dans l'état actuel du pays *ne peut pas être reconnue pour légale* et que les décisions d'une pareille Assemblée n'auraient, à nos yeux, *aucune signification*.

En vue de cela, je conseille au Gouvernement Bulgare,

1^o d'ajourner les élections à une date la plus éloignée possible ;

2^o—pour faire sortir le pays de l'état de surexcitation dans lequel il se trouve actuellement et pour donner possibilité que les élections puissent avoir lieu sans pression et dans les conditions plus normales,—de lever immédiatement l'état de siège et de mettre en même temps en liberté tous ceux qui se trouvent arrêtés par suite des événements du 9 Août.*

Veuillez recevoir l'assurance de ma considération distinguée.

(signé :) BARON KAULBARS.

This note was viewed from two distinct stand-points. In the first place this sort of interference in the affairs of another country was undoubtedly an enormity, which was at the same time well matched with a blunder ; for Kaulbars must at least have understood sufficient of foreign politics to know the kind of impression this brutal assertion of the plans of Russia would make abroad. After this note Russia could no longer deny abroad, that she was interfering fundamentally in the interior affairs of Bulgaria, albeit she had only just declared in a circular letter to the Powers, that she had not the remotest intention of so doing. The eyes of Europe would of necessity be opened, as well as those

* Corresponds to 21st August, New Style.—*Trans.*

of the few Bulgarians, who had allowed themselves to be deceived with regard to Russia's designs. It was a clever move on the part of the Bulgarians to insist on a written exposition of the demands of Russia, while on Kaulbars' part it was not a very politic action thus early to unmask the Russian batteries.

Of almost greater importance appears to me to be the second consideration. That Russia was the author of the revolt against the Prince—this all the world knew; but she had till now shrunk from openly avowing the fact, and her friends had so far always had the grace to try and tone down their demands for the non-punishment of the officers with the expression of apprehension that their punishment might lead to disturbances, might induce the "other party" to retaliate, etc., etc. With one blow now had Kaulbars rent this veil, and *Russian Imperialism had unequivocally declared for the rebels. He had recognised that to a band of conspirators could be granted the rights of a belligerent party, and he had thus placed in their hands a weapon by which the right of rebellion might be exalted to a State maxim. What however is the right of rebel officers in Bulgaria, is lawful for Nihilists in Russia.* I know not whether the Emperor of Russia has thought of this possible wider application of his mode of action and has considered it in this light; any way others have, and a *brochure*, which was published in Bulgaria by Sakhary Stoyanoff, under the title of "Crowned Nihilists," might at least shew Kaulbars what effect the sympathy of the Emperor for these treasonable officers had produced in a certain camp. Nihilism is a disease, which is not to be combated merely with the weapons of brutal force, but against which moral

weapons are equally indispensable. To have acted in a directly adverse sense, to have afforded Nihilism in its most criminal form a justification—this is what in Bulgaria the Russian Government has with its own hands done, and I shall be astonished if the results that might be expected do not follow.

I have no intention of busying myself here with the burning question of Russian interior politics; the Russian Government ought to know what it is doing, and if it does not know, that is its own fault. With regard to the impression produced on the Bulgarians by Kaulbars' note, it was evident at the first glance, that the Government would not give way, and indeed could not give way, even if they wished to. At the very moment, when Kaulbars was despatching this note, a strong spirit of conciliation was rising amongst many politicians, and many were of opinion that everything should be yielded that could be, compatibly with the honour and independence of the country. This sentiment has appeared again and again; but never have the Russians been shrewd enough to recognise it at the right moment, and and to make the most of it. On the contrary they have again and again committed the blunder of, just at the very time that they were beginning to waver, flying in the face of the Bulgarians, and thus evoking afresh their resistance. This was a case in point, and the unanimous opinion of both Regents and Ministers was that the Russian demand, in the form in which it was presented, could not possibly be acceded to. Regarding the state of siege, it was stated from the very first, that no great store was laid on its maintenance. Kaulbars was also advised in his own interests to forego this demand, as,

without the state of siege, prints would at once appear, which might say very ill-natured things about him, and perhaps even about his master, the Emperor, and for the suppression of which the laws of Bulgaria afforded no means. Kaulbars replied to this, that he had to his anger seen several productions of the Bulgarian press, which spoke of Prince Alexander in terms, the repetition of which (of course in relation to the Tzar) could not possibly be permitted. To the rejoinder, that this could not be prevented on account of the freedom of the press that ruled in Bulgaria, Kaulbars replied that, that really was nothing. Only send to him the authors of writings of that description, and he would talk to them and so persuade them of their error that they would write in a wholly different strain. On the remark that they were men who could not be "persuaded," Kaulbars replied that that had nothing to say to it, and accordingly it was at length agreed to raise the state of siege.

Regarding the postponement of the elections, the Ministry was from the very first firmly convinced, that no concession could be thought of. Especially firm on this point was Stambuloff, while on the other hand Karaveloff, who generally had begun to shew a suspicious gravitation towards the Russian Consulate, characterised this question as one of "routine," and hence one open to discussion. Karaveloff remained alone, and in even sharper tones in the Ministry than in the Regency was the determination expressed to yield nothing to the Russians.

The third demand, regarding the officers, met with an equally stout resistance, though at one time it seemed as if a compromise would be offered to the Russians, the

ringleaders alone being retained in confinement, while the prosecution of those persons, who had been "misled" by them, was dispensed with.

That this weak mood did not continue was once more due to Kaulbars, who, one might almost say, brilliantly misconstrued the position of affairs. It is possible that, having noticed that a certain yielding spirit had for the moment got the upper-hand in the Government, he may have considered that, under these circumstances, a well directed blow could not fail to have the best effect by intimidating the vacillating Ministers to such an extent that they, in dread of incurring the Tzar's displeasure, would make an unconditional surrender. Accordingly M. Kaulbars set to work, and taking his best pen, composed a "round robin" to the Russian Consuls in Bulgaria, which was destined to acquire renown later under the title of "The Twelve Points," or "The Twelve Commandments of M. Kaulbars." This document was worded as follows:—

"On my arrival at Sofia, I was met by a deputation, to whom I addressed a speech, the tenour of which I divide into twelve points, viz. :—

(1.) Bulgaria is passing through a crisis, on the issue of which depend both her present and future. The Emperor, who desires only the welfare of Bulgaria, hopes that at the present time all Bulgarians, laying aside their party strifes, will approach Russia in a sincere and friendly spirit, and with full confidence will turn to the Tzar as their sole liberator.

(2.) The time being now past for empty words and demonstrations, the Tzar looks for deeds, by which Bulgaria will give incontestable proof of her devotion, when, and not before, the Tzar will permit

the further development of the country both in interior and exterior matters.

(3.) Russia neither desires, nor is striving for, the annihilation of Bulgaria; on the contrary she desires the development of the country on every side; and if the Bulgarians only approach their Russian brethren in a friendly spirit, they may reckon on full support in the questions, which are so intimately bound up with their existence and their future as a State.

(4.) The recent actions of the Bulgarians do not argue that confidence in the Tzar, which Russia had a right to expect from them. An example of this was the omission to publish the message of thanks from the Tzar of the 11th September.

(5.) The destruction of the colours must have produced a most unfortunate impression on every military man. The destruction of a colour is a barbarous deed, without example in history; an outrage to every military instinct and discipline. For the colour is a symbol, which is given to the custody of a body of soldiers, and must only be taken from them if they prove themselves unworthy of it. Thus it is that, what has taken place regarding the Cadets' School, can only act detrimentally on the ideas of honour of the future generation of officers.

(6.) If it be true that a St. George's decoration adorned one of the colours and was destroyed with it, the Bulgarians have violated international law.

(7.) It argues a ridiculous want of logic and throws a very disadvantageous light on the Deputies of the Sobranje, that they despatched simultaneous messages to the Tzar and to the Prince of Battenberg.

(8.) Neither the Prince of Battenberg, nor any one of his brothers, will, on any pretence, ever again be able to ascend the Bulgarian throne.

(9.) We demand that the meeting of the National Assembly shall only take place after free elections, conducted without any pressure.

(10.) We consider as indispensable for that end, and demand, that the state of siege be raised; the officers, who took part in the revolution be immediately set at liberty; and the postponement of the elections for two months.

(11.) In support of my demand for the liberation of the officers, I have stated that we, from our point of view, are unable to acknowledge the moral right of the present Government—a Government chosen from a political party, and devoid of all legal or firm basis—to pass sentence on and to prosecute another political party.

(12.) Finally we counsel all Bulgarian patriots to forget the past, and only to think of the future, and in a friendly and unanimous spirit to set about the preparations for the new political life which is opening for them, and in this way, by the removal of all miasmas, to clear the ground for their new, youthful Government."

(Signed) KAULBARS.

Hitherto there had ever been a few, solitary souls, who would still venture to speak of the moderation and statesmanlike policy of Kaulbars; but with this circular this was past for ever. It was no longer a mediator or friendly adviser, it was no longer a diplomatist, but a Russian Pro-Consul *pur et simple*, who was making his

entry into a hitherto badly-governed province, and considered it his first duty to draw tight the slumbering reins of discipline, and to place their true position before the eyes of his subjects with emphatic clearness. The sense of the circular, already above measure strong, was however surpassed by the mode adopted for its publication, which was not only unusual and unheard of, but approximated closely to a breach of international law. Kaulbars had his circular hektographed, and in this form distributed through the town, for which object he employed, in addition to his Kavasses, various scoundrels hired for the purpose. Such a thing has probably never before happened, that in the country, to the Government of which he was accredited, a Diplomatic Representative has had distributed, by hawkers, documents, to which his signature was appended, which not only insulted that Government and the entire country in the most shameful manner, but bore an absolutely seditious character. For in the declaration, that the existing Government possessed no legal basis, when viewed in conjunction with the numerous attacks, of which that Government had been the object, lay without doubt a summons to resist and overthrow it.

The question has been asked, whence this circular in truth originated? Some say that its paternity rests entirely with Kaulbars; others assert on good grounds, that it, in the exact form in which it was published, had been telegraphed from St. Petersburg. The latter opinion is based on the similarity that is to be found between the general ideas and tone of this document and the notorious reply of the Emperor of Russia to Prince Alexander's telegram from Rustchuk. Thus it is said, that if the note had really been the result of

Kaulbars' own initiative, it would certainly have avoided assertions, the erroneousness of which must have been known at the Russian Consulate. Thus, for example, the assertion that a St. George's cross had been burnt with the colour of the "Junkerschule." Colonel Sakharoff had been long enough Commandant of that School to be perfectly acquainted with its colour, and to know that it did not bear the cross in question. Similarly it was known at the Consulate, that the telegram from the Emperor of Russia, in reply to the congratulatory telegram from the Chamber of Deputies, had not been published in the official organ, for the sole reason that M. Neklyudoff had expressly requested, that it should not be published. Mistakes of this description, which at once suggest themselves, would not, it was said, have occurred, had Kaulbars himself been the author. The purpose of the circular was clearly evident, viz., to shew the Bulgarians, that they were opposing the clearly expressed will of the Tzar—a will which demanded obedience, and nothing but obedience. It was believed that they would perceive their own utter powerlessness to resist it, that the Ministry would humbly bow before it—and it was once more shewn, how little the Bulgarians were known. Within the Bulgarian Government Kaulbars' action caused the greatest anger, and the policy of intimidation, pursued by the Russian Agent, only resulted in the closer union of the members of the Government. The brutality of the Russian action shewed in the clearest light, what they would have to expect, were Russia once more to obtain a firm footing in Bulgaria, and aroused the whole spirit of opposition throughout the country. "We are not Turkoman Hordes, and will not allow

ourselves to be treated as such"—these were the words that one everywhere heard. But it was not only within the Government, but throughout the country, that the circular produced the deepest indignation, and that this was the case, was at once evident from the fact that wherever Kaulbars' hawkers were seen, and attempted to shew their "Twelve Points," they were forthwith soundly thrashed and kicked out. This has afforded me the opportunity for observing a noteworthy trait of the shrewdness of the national character of the Bulgarians. Whenever one of the hawkers of the Russian Consulate received a drubbing, he was expressly told, that the reason was, that he was spreading a *forged* document. I know for certain that, in this respect, no special *mot d'ordre* had gone forth; but that nevertheless the most various people in the most various localities hit on this diplomatic quibble for beating Kaulbars' envoys without thereby violating the respect due to a foreign Consul. The pretext was of course most transparent, and the people, it need not be said, were well aware of what they were doing; and this trait appears to be so significant, that I could not pass it over.

As might be supposed, Kaulbars considered it culpable, and in the highest degree improper, that his hawkers should everywhere encounter such a striking expression of ill-will, and accordingly on the 29th September he directed a note to the Bulgarian Government complaining of the ill-usage of "Russian subjects." That these same "Russian subjects" had only a few days previously received Russian passports, and until then had been quite ordinary Bulgarians, is only mentioned here *en parenthèse*. When the Russian Dragoman handed this

note of complaint to M. Nacevics, the latter gave him a verbal reply to the effect, that he regretted what had occurred, and that the guilty, if convicted, should be punished; but that the Government must decline all moral responsibility for occurrences of this sort, the responsibility rather lying with them, who, in the present circumstances, caused documents to be distributed, the whole purport of which was inflammatory and calculated to cause breaches of the peace. Hitherto the Bulgarian Government had remained strictly on the defensive: with this parry however it had already passed, though still scarcely perceptibly so, to the offensive, answering accusations with counter-accusations. Kaulbars however had not only attempted by this circular to incite the populace against the Government, and by his interference to cause disturbances; he had also on the occasion of the arrest of one of his hawkers, a certain Prokop Ivanoff, sent his Dragoman and a Kavass to the Prefecture of Police, who, revolver in hand, liberated the prisoner. Thus there reigned in Sofia, thanks to the pains of M. Kaulbars, a condition of things, which was most charming. The populace was beginning to get excited, and the prospect increased, that Kaulbars would gain his end and cause real disorder. The course of events was much the same in the provinces; at Philippopolis in particular the Russian Consul likewise distributed a circular, and had it placarded on the Consulate. In the case of the hawkers, who undertook the distribution among the taverns, it happened precisely as at Sofia, *i.e.* they were beaten wherever they shewed themselves. In front of the Consulate in Philippopolis a mob collected, which appeared to the Consul to be so formidable, that he ordered his

Kavasses to tear down the circular, the crowd on this dispersing with cheers for the independence of Bulgaria. On the whole Kaulbars with his "Twelve Points" had only succeeded in strengthening the anti-Russian feeling in Bulgaria. Indeed, in view of the quiet attitude of the populace, he had to abandon the hope that his proclamation would lead to real disturbances.

While Kaulbars was in this manner trying with his "Twelve Points" to cause agitation amongst the populace, the negotiations regarding the "Three Points" (Raising of the state of siege, Postponement of the elections, and Liberation of the officers) went on between the Russian Consulate and the Government. On the 29th September the Ministry finally decided, that the Russian demand, as far as it concerned the elections and the officers in arrest, could not be acceded to: animated however by the desire to shew the greatest moderation and a disposition to establish a Russo-Bulgarian understanding, the Ministry determined not to send an immediate answer to the Russian note, but first of all, through a prominent member of the Government, once more privately to bring to the notice of the Russian Representative the reasons which made it impossible for the Government to accede to the Russian demands. The Bulgarians were animated less with the hope of persuading Kaulbars of the justice of their refusal, than with the desire rather to at least prove that they had tried conciliation to the last moment, and had done all that lay in their power to avoid an open breach. The next day Stambuloff went to Kaulbars, and attempted to convince him of the impracticability of his demands, but without the smallest success. On

this the Ministry decided once more to adopt an extreme measure, and to repair *in corpore* to Kaulbars, in order to shew him clearly and in the most impressive manner, that the Ministry was not in a position to concede the Russian demands without violating the Laws and the Constitution. A postponement of the elections would be at variance with the latter: with regard to the liberation of the officers, this was a matter concerning the perfectly independent military courts, with which the Government could in no way interfere. Finally, as regarded the state of siege, the Government was, in spite of many considerations to the contrary, prepared to raise it, in order to afford Russia a proof of their good-will. Kaulbars received this announcement very ungraciously, and told the Ministers, that, no matter what legal arguments they might adduce, the only thing they established was their ill-will. *His Majesty the Emperor knows the Bulgarian Laws and the Constitution much better than the Bulgarians themselves; accordingly any demand he may make cannot well be contrary to the Laws.* Finally he declared himself ready to telegraph the objections, urged by the Bulgarians, to St. Petersburg, but remarked at the same time that they certainly must not count on their receiving any attention, for, what the Emperor has once said, is law and must remain law.

Having thus done all, that lay in their power, to avoid meeting the Russian demands with a direct refusal, the Bulgarian Government, on the 1st October, presented a note to Kaulbars, in which M. Nacevics represented that the Bulgarian Government was most grateful to the Russian Government for its advice, which, as regarded the state of siege, had been already acted

upon, and would be further followed "*in so far as the Laws of the country and the Constitution would permit.*" In these courteous phrases the Russian demands were in effect rejected, and M. Kaulbars thereupon hastened to express to the Government his deep regret at this decision, and at the same time solemnly to make them responsible for all consequences.

The general impression does not seem to have been, that the Bulgarians would find the onus of this responsibility very heavy, and this appears to have been the opinion also of Kaulbars, for he began to cast about for other means to humble the Bulgarians, or to place them in a false position before Russia and Europe. The means, which, to all appearance, accorded best with his personal taste, and of which he invariably sought from predilection to avail himself, was the exciting of revolts. His "Twelve Points," as well as his hawkers, had proved themselves too weak to effect this, and Kaulbars now proceeded to take stronger measures. On the 29th September he summoned to his presence a Macedonian voïvode,* by name Babadjhan, who, having been forced to leave Macedonia as a fugitive, had since lived in Sofia and had been in constant correspondence with the Russians. This Babadjhan belonged to one of the eleven families of Macedonian voïvodes, who had for ages enjoyed considerable influence among their compatriots. As moreover many Macedonians reside in Sofia, it was hoped that they might be "got at" through him. Kaulbars, without more ado, asked Babadjhan, whether he, with the aid of the Macedonians living in Sofia, would start a revolt against the existing Government, and how

* A title of nobility.—*Trans.*

much money would probably be required for the purpose. Should the revolt succeed, added Kaulbars, the Russians would come to Bulgaria, and then without delay free Macedonia also from the Turkish yoke. Babadjhan seemed not ill-pleased with the plan, for he replied that he would mention the matter to his countrymen and see what could be done. He forthwith put himself in communication with several Macedonians, but his proposals met with but little response. The affair seemed doubtful to these people, and two of them went to Major Panitza, who since the war had been held in high esteem by the Macedonians, and asked him whether Babadjhan's proposal was really a good and commendable one. They had however come to altogether the wrong shop, for Panitza, who is one of the most uncompromising adherents of the Regency, expressed himself regarding Babadjhan's plans in such terms, that Babadjhan has not since dared to shew himself. This attempt to induce the Macedonians to rise, was the first step which Kaulbars took on the road of open and unconcealed revolution.

During the first days of his presence in Sofia, Kaulbars had a conversation with one of the Bulgarian Regents, in which the latter told the General, that the Regency were not as yet able to concede the Russian demands for the reason, that the population in some towns, *e.g.* Philippopolis, would openly resist the acceptance of the demands of Russia.

"Dont you believe it," answered Kaulbars. "No one will offer any resistance, and should any suspicious news come from Philippopolis, I will go there and speak to the populace. The people love the Emperor, and at the first word will cheer me and ratify everything." It would

appear from this, that already at that time, Kaulbars felt his vocation was that of a demagogue, and nourished a secret belief in his own irresistibility, only awaiting an opportunity to give full scope to his talents. The opportunity was about to offer itself.

Sunday, the 3rd October, was the last Sunday preceding the elections, and consequently, as is the custom at Sofia, a popular meeting was held, for the purpose of considering the elections about to take place. On an open square in front of a small church a fairly considerable crowd had assembled, to which the Deputy Iliya Vultsheff addressed a speech, in which he told them, that he with some other Bulgarians had been at General Kaulbars' for the purpose of placing before him the desires of the Bulgarian Patriots, and to entreat him to use the influence of Russia in favour of the freedom and independence of the country. The meeting was listening with great attention, but with the most perfect quiet, when suddenly a well-known Russian *agent-provocateur*, waving his hat, shouted—"Long live the Emperor of Russia; down with Bulgaria!" It was impossible that this impudent challenge should miss its mark. Everyone rushed at the offender; in an instant he was thrown down, and a rain of fierce blows from stout knotted sticks descended on him. Some members of that chosen band, which had for some days past been enjoying Kaulbars' hospitality at the Russian Agency, attempted to take their comrade's part, but only shared his fate, and received a sound thrashing. They would very likely have been beaten to death, had the gendarmes not intervened, and protected the beaten men from further maltreatment. Some of the injured were carried

off to hospital, but one was brought in a drosliky to the Consulate, where Kaulbars had remained longingly hoping to receive a mangled corpse. No sooner had it arrived than he jumped into the carriage, and betook himself to the spot, where the unhappy people—whose thoughts do not fly to the “pauv’ peup” of French popular meetings?—were being maltreated and murdered by their tormentors. By the time Kaulbars, as an avenging god, arrived, the populace had already calmed down, and were once more listening attentively to Dr. Vultsheff. Kaulbars’ arrival was at once noticed, and he had the satisfaction of seeing himself at first greeted in the most courteous manner by nearly everyone, hats and caps being doffed. He walked about at first hither and thither as if undecided, then making his way in a zig-zag through the crowd, that opened out before him, he went up to the tribune, which he requested Vultsheff to yield up to him. Vultsheff at once acceded to his request, and when Kaulbars then mounted the tribune, he was not unsympathetically received by the mob. It appeared to the Bulgarians very becoming, that a Russian General should thus condescend to the populace, and should desire to take part in their consultations.

Kaulbars could not help noticing the movement in his favour, and began to address the “Bratushkis”* with much assurance. He had, he said, come there because a man had been brought into his Consulate, who had been severely beaten because he had cried, “Long live the Emperor of Russia!” “That is not true! He cried, ‘down with Bulgaria!’”—was the vehement re-echo that reached him from every side;

* *i.e.* “My dear Brethren.—*Trans.*

and the ever increasing hubbub obliged him to desist from any attempt to pursue this subject further. The "tamer of the people" accordingly changed his theme, and discoursed on the benevolent intentions of the Emperor of Russia, who only desired the welfare of Bulgaria. "That is not true!"—came again to him from the crowd, and shouts of "Hurrah for the independence of Bulgaria!" smote with an unkind ring on the Kaulbars' ears. M. Kaulbars however apparently did not belong to that class of man, who allows himself to be easily intimidated, for he ever and again attempted to gain a hearing, and he even began now to lay before the people and to explain the "Three Points." "The officers must immediately be liberated." * * * * "Nemoshe! nemoshe!—Impossible!" resounds from every side. "Moshe!—it is possible;" cries Kaulbars; but the people were of another opinion, and stuck to their "nemoshe." Kaulbars began to get angry; "moshes" and "nemoshes" flew backwards and forwards; but finally a thousand pairs of lungs triumphed over one. Kaulbars next alluded to the postponement of the elections, but here again a regrettable difference of opinion manifested itself. This time however it was the people who cried "nemoshe, they can not be postponed!", and Kaulbars, who said "Moshe, they can!" The General probably felt that this sort of exchange of opinions not only could lead to no result, but moreover placed him in no very dignified position, and accordingly he proceeded to do the one thing that of all others he should have avoided—he talked himself into a rage, and began to threaten the people. His menaces however failed to produce any effect, and the

cries "Hurrah for independence! hurrah for the Constitution!" only became more passionate, and when at length Kaulbars shook his fist at the people, a formidable uproar ensued. Hands were upraised, and sticks brandished above the heads of the crowd, and it looked as if a rush forward was about to take place. Deadly pale and trembling with anger, Kaulbars attempted to still the storm, but all in vain, and his voice could no longer make itself heard. "Hurrah for Bulgaria! Hurrah for the Constitution!" resounded on every side, and with these cries were mingled those of "*dolu! dolu!*" which completely drowned Kaulbars' words. At one moment it looked as if the crowd would precipitate itself on Kaulbars, but happily the latter came to the conclusion, that it was now high time to beat a retreat. With the words, "this shall not continue," he quitted the tribune and, surrounded and protected by gendarmes, he gained his carriage.

Hardly however was Kaulbars' back turned, when the mob once again became quiet, and, without any interruption, listened to an orator, who urged them in fiery words to stand together as *one* man in the struggle for Bulgarian independence. The crowd then moved off to the residence of the President of the Ministry, Radoslavoff, where an enthusiastic demonstration took place, and an address was presented, exhorting the Regency and Ministry not to yield one step in the struggle for Bulgarian independence. Radoslavoff delivered a short speech, which somewhat calmed the crowd, and as in the interval a few influential Deputies had also mingled amongst them and had dissuaded them from all precipitate action, the crowd renounced their

intention of returning the visit of Kaulbars at his General-Consulate!

What then had been the result to Kaulbars of his mob oratory? In the first place he had afforded the citizens of Sofia an opportunity of expressing their sentiments in the clearest possible manner; secondly, by his conduct, without parallel in diplomatic history, he had proved, that right and law only existed in Bulgaria for Russia so long as it suited her; and thirdly, he had with his own hand most perceptibly weakened the ever still powerful prestige of the Russian Crown, in that he, its Representative, had brought himself, as regarded the Bulgarians, into an undignified, or, viewed from their standpoint, ridiculous situation. "The spell was broken," and for the rest of the day the Bulgarians were everywhere heard recounting again and again with intense glee the mishap in all its details of M. Kaulbars.

To tell the truth, there prevailed at first a certain feeling of uneasiness, for it was generally thought that Kaulbars would now immediately take his departure, and that the final break with Russia would be the result. That it must in the end come to that, most Bulgarians believed, but now that the decisive moment seemed to have arrived, they were disposed to view it somewhat seriously and with a certain amount of trepidation. Help however came to them from a totally unexpected quarter, namely from Kaulbars himself. Immediately after his essay at mob oratory, he had driven to the house of the German Representative, Herr von Thielmann, to whom he had made a surprising communication, that, although it was true that he had encountered some hostilities, he was not on the whole discontented with his oratorical

success. He was now going to make a tour through the provinces, with a view of gaining a better and closer knowledge of the people. He expressed himself in similar terms to the Austrian Representative, Herr von Burian, and again later when returning to his own Consulate. Already by midday it was known, that Kaulbars, far from brooding over a terrific vengeance or demanding satisfaction, was in the highest degree contented. This caused great amusement; if this dish pleases M. Kaulbars, there is plenty more that can be served up!

The Bulgarian Government was by no means charmed with Kaulbars, for his conduct spoke such a truculent disregard for all international obligations, that only the very worst could be expected from Russia. On the top of this came now the projected tour through the interior, which, it was self-evident, could have but one object, to stir the populace up against the Regency. It was also feared that Kaulbars would try and place himself in communication with the officers of the provincial garrisons, and inveigle them into making a pronunciamiento. It was known that numerous Russian agents were travelling about the country, and, by circulating false rumours, were seeking to strike terror into the populace. In Sofia Russian agents had been arrested, who had carried their audacity to the extent of promenading the open streets dressed as gendarmes; it was known that a large number of notorious criminals had found refuge in the Russian Consulate; and there were in addition not wanting distinct signs that agitation was at work among the officers of the Shumla garrison. People were accordingly quite prepared for the intelligence, that a revolt had broken out somewhere, while

moreover the arrival in Bulgaria *viâ* Constantinople of numerous Montenegrins seemed to admit of no other explanation. But the apprehensions, that were entertained on this account, were to a great extent balanced by the feeling of satisfaction, that now at length in Europe must be recognised what was the goal for which Russia was steering, and that her aims were incompatible with the demands, which other States must raise, if their own interests were not to suffer most serious detriment. In spite of the pre-occupation with home affairs, time had still ever been found to keep a watchful eye on Europe, and it was perceived that the general current of feeling was setting more and more in Bulgaria's favour. It was yet a long way from being entirely in accordance with Bulgarian desires; Tisza's speech however in the Hungarian Chamber of Deputies was calculated to raise the Bulgarian hopes.

Accordingly M. Kaulbars was allowed to set off in peace, on his tour the Bulgarian Government contenting itself with intimating to Neklyudoff, that it could not be held responsible, if M. Kaulbars again "went amongst the people," and failed to receive from them that respect and attention, which were due to a Representative of His Majesty the Emperor.

CHAPTER XIX.

KAULBARS ON HIS TRAVELS.

To Orkhanie, Vratsha, and Plevna—Points and Counterpoints—The Officers at Sistova misconstrue the good intentions of M. Kaulbars in a lamentable manner—The good peasants of Knäsha—M. Kaulbars becomes incautious—Rustchuk and Shumla—Disillusions—The Regiments do *not* march on Timova—Major Petroff causes M. Kaulbars grief—The wicked people of Varna.

One had for an instant doubted whether the intention to travel, expressed by Kaulbars, was in earnest or not, but on the day following his not very successful speech to the Sofia mob, he set off on his journey into the dark land. I am quite justified in this case in thus designating Bulgaria, for Kaulbars, in counting on a triumphal progress only shewed how trifling in reality was his knowledge of Bulgaria. Before his departure he had said, that, during his speech at Sofia, some Nihilists and gipseys had made a row, and had prevented the "true people" from expressing their views. He was now going into the provinces in order to establish personal relations with the "true people."

Let us accompany Kaulbars in this endeavour. Immediately prior to his departure, he had had a further interview with the representative of the Agence Havas, in the course of which he expressed a threat, that should any ill befall him on his journey, 100,000 Russians would enter Bulgaria. As the Bulgarian Government were by no means anxious for the said 100,000 Russians or their visit to Bulgaria, they determined, although they had

already officially washed their hands of all responsibility, to go even further, and as far as they could possibly foresee, to take every measure honestly to insure Kaulbars' meeting with as little to annoy and vex him on his journey through Bulgaria as possible. Without danger the journey certainly was not, and in Sofia many bets were made, and Kaulbars' steps were followed, just as the famous Englishman followed the lion-tamer, so that he might be present when the wild beasts tore him to pieces. The Bulgarian Government however had no desire, that Kaulbars should be torn to pieces, and accordingly adopted a measure, which, in the simplicity of their hearts, seemed a sound one. Kaulbars was travelling as an apostle of the Pan-Russian Gospel; what more natural, than that a forerunner should be sent before him to make his paths straight, and to restrain evil men from meeting him in an unfriendly manner. In order that this forerunner might be invested with the necessary authority, he was chosen from among the highest officers of the Bulgarian army; to no less a personage than to Major Petroff, the Chief of the General Staff, fell the task of proceeding in advance of Kaulbars, and preparing the population for his arrival, and of assuring the personal safety of the General. Kaulbars has since affirmed, that Petroff did nothing but inflame the country-people against him, and thus destroy the success of his tour. But this is certainly not true, for it cannot be supposed, that such an intelligent officer as Petroff should have so regrettably misinterpreted the instructions given him by the Government.

On the 4th October the two started off, Petroff in advance and Kaulbars following. Orkhanie was the

town at which he passed the first night, and there he received a popular deputation, whom he addressed on the subject of the "Three Points." The deputation listened attentively, declared their great veneration for the Tzar, and then formulated *their* programme as follows:—

Firstly—the People have full and unbounded confidence in the Regency and Ministry, and believe, that the present Government alone is in a position, successfully to steer Bulgaria through the serious crisis, in which she is at present involved. *Secondly*—the People are of opinion, that the elections should be at once held, as there is no reason for postponing them, and the prolongation of the present position can only act injuriously on trade, industry and agriculture. *Thirdly*—the People demand, that the participators in the abominable crime against His Highness the Prince, shall be severely punished, as only in this way can the respect for law in the country, and discipline in the army, be upheld.

With this programme Kaulbars was by no means pleased, but its attentive consideration is nevertheless necessary, as repeated reference will be made to it in the sequel. As Kaulbars had his "Three Points" and his "Twelve Points," so the Bulgarians on their side claimed "Three Counterpoints," which found expression in the above programme.

At Vratsha, whither Kaulbars proceeded on the following day, matters went somewhat better, though not perhaps quite as one would have expected in this stronghold of Russianism. Kaulbars discoursed on the "Three Points," which received the approval of one deputation, another however replying by the presentation

of a written document, containing the "Three Counter-points." Anyhow it cannot be denied that the feeling here was not unfavourable towards Kaulbars. At Plevna, his next stage, the reception was cold, and a large deputation, which had gone to meet him, in reply to his speech said, that they would think over the matter, a meditation for which Kaulbars did not wait, for, apparently, he was very anxious to be in Shumla by the 10th October, the day of the elections.

With the urban populations Kaulbars had always limited himself to the discussion of the "Three Points," but in the case of the country people of the village of Knäsha, he unbent more and shewed them his most secret thoughts. In the first place he asked the peasants, whether the elections were free? "Certainly, one can vote, as one wishes." But were the elections really *perfectly* free? "Well, of course they might be a trifle freer;" The ice was now broken, and an old peasant agve vent to the following startling expression, "The elections will not be really perfectly free, till they are conducted by the Russians." Apparently Kaulbars had now found the "true people," for whom he had so long been seeking, and accordingly he ceased doing violence to his inclinations, and spoke out his mind freely. The peasants had only to give it to him in writing, that the elections were not free, and that they desired the presence of the Russians, and the Russians would at once come. That they were not there already, rested entirely with the Bulgarians. Matters could not go on as they were, and the present Government must soon fall. *The Rustchuk and Shumla garrisons were already on the march against Tirnova, to rescue the officers in confinement in that*

town, and this would be settled very shortly. The chief thing is that good citizens should have confidence in His Majesty, the Emperor. This speech is very remarkable, not only in itself, but also on account of a most singular coincidence. At the time when Kaulbars considered himself in a position to inform the peasants of Knäsha of the march on Tirnova of the Rustchuk and Shumla garrisons, in both those towns something very suspicious had occurred. The commandants of the three regiments, stationed at Shumla, Captains Kosareff of the Artillery, Dikoff of the Infantry, and Lutzkaroff of the Cavalry, had sent a message to Stambuloff, praying him to assent to the Russian demands, for "Bulgaria cannot possibly wage war with Russia." They had in Sofia been for some time aware, that all was not quite right at Shumla, and when at last this message was received, preparations were at once made for speedily and effectively encountering a rising. The Philippopolis, Slivno, Tirnova and Rustchuk Regiments received orders to hold themselves in readiness to march on Shumla, and the Government made all arrangements for overwhelming with one fell blow any revolt. At the same time the War Minister, Colonel Nikdayeff, asked the three Regimental Commanders in a telegram, couched in most explicit terms, what their telegram to Stambuloff meant, and whether they had any intention of interfering in politics? The reply that was forthwith received from the Commandants ran comparatively satisfactorily. They had never—they telegraphed—thought for an instant of undertaking anything in opposition to the Regency, their despatch to Stambuloff having been merely a piece of patriotic advice of a

purely private nature. They however saw that in so doing they had been wrong, and begged forgiveness. The Ministry were glad to be able to grant it to them, and the Shumla garrison accordingly—did *not* march on Tirnova. As at Shumla so at Rustchuk an extraordinary occurrence had taken place; for twenty-four hours before Kaulbars spoke at Knäsha, Shatokhin, the Russian Consul at Rustchuk, had gone to Lieutenant-Colonel Filoff, the Commandant of the brigade there quartered, had brought him Kaulbars' "Twelve Points," and at the same time had transmitted to him the General's "order" to at once set at liberty the officers in confinement at Rustchuk, failing which he would hold him responsible for the consequences of his disobedience. On this day Filoff once more did his duty, replied by a refusal, and reported the Russian Consul's attempt to seduce him from his duty, by telegram to the War Minister.

The question now arises—how was it, that Kaulbars was able to tell the Knäsha peasants, that the Shumla and Rustchuk garrisons were marching on Tirnova? The coincidence of the Rustchuk and Shumla occurrences with Kaulbars' speech is a pretty striking one, or, to put it shortly and plainly, it proves with almost absolute certainty, that Kaulbars was aware of the imminent military revolt, and erred only in so far as to believe, that the means of persuasion, at the disposal of his agents, must prove wholly irresistible. The conviction forces itself on us, that Kaulbars did not intentionally lie to the peasants, but that he really believed that his behests had already been obeyed, and that the military revolt had broken out. To the Bulgarian Government the premature boasts of the General were of the greatest value, for they shewed

the danger in the most glaring light, and thus obliged the Government to take rapid and decisive measures, such as otherwise perhaps they might not have ordained in quite so trenchant a manner.

Should any doubts be still entertained, as to whether the Representative of the Russian Emperor desired to incite the Bulgarian officers against the legitimate Government, they will at any rate be removed by the conduct, which Kaulbars thought fit to pursue with the officers at Sistova. After he had got over the meeting with the civil population in the approved style—exposition of the “Three Points,” and answer with the “Three Counter-Points”—Kaulbars sent to the senior officer in the garrison, one of the Battalion-Commanders of the Plevna Regiment, and requested his presence with that of the officers of the garrison. The answer, perfectly correct in form and tenour, ran, that, to their great regret, it was impossible for the officers to accede to the General’s wish without a distinct order from their Government, and that for the rest they held the opinion that they, as officers, ought not to busy themselves with politics. Kaulbars did not yet consider himself beaten, and made a last attempt, addressing a letter to the same officer in which he said that he was at that moment travelling in Bulgaria in order to impart to the people the intentions and views of His Majesty the Emperor. As the task imposed on him also had reference to the army, he requested the senior officer of the garrison, with all other officers off duty, to come to him, so that he might discharge the duty with which he was entrusted. The answer returned was just as decided as the former, only that an aggrieved tone at the importunity of the

General ran through this one. M. Kaulbars could not have been much edified at the simple words—"The senior officer of the garrison has nothing to alter in, and nothing to add to his first answer."

Under these circumstances he considered it best to continue his journey with all speed, and as no steamer was on the spot, he embarked on a sailing boat for Rustchuk. This journey by water must have kept the Bulgarian Government for some hours in no slight agitation, as the Prefect of Rustchuk reported by telegraph that M. Kaulbars had not arrived at the time expected, and that a terrific storm was raging on the Danube. In this portion of the Danube gusts of wind arise with such violence and suddenness as to fill small boats, such as that on which Kaulbars had embarked, with water and sink them. The case was repeatedly occurring, and when hour after hour passed without Kaulbars arriving, most serious apprehensions began to be entertained, that he had come to grief on the Danube. What would have been the consequences of such an event? It goes without saying, that the mishap would have been laid to the door of the Bulgarians; that it would have been asserted that they had surprised the boat on the river and had scuttled her; or, at the very least, that they had employed sorcery to raise the storm, which had prepared a bed for Kaulbars at the bottom of the, here not "blue," but dirty yellow Danube. Thus the Bulgarians were overjoyed on receiving a telegram to the effect, that Kaulbars' cranky boat had at length reached Rustchuk, having been delayed a few hours. There the General was received by a Russian Consul, a Russian Kavass, two "well affected" private individuals,

and two gendarmes. The next day the aspect of affairs was not much better: especially was this apparent when Kaulbars, having sent for the Prefect, had to undergo the mortification of receiving his answer that, "he would esteem it a great honour to return the General's visit, as soon as he (the Prefect) had received him (Kaulbars)." More successful was he with the Brigadier, Lieutenant-Colonel Filoff, whom the Vice-Consul, Shatokhin and Kartzoff, who had come expressly for the purpose from Widdin, had intimidated into coming. I do not believe that Filoff acted with any bad intention, but he had been told that the Russian occupation was imminent; that he would be a general, if he obeyed Kaulbars, a sergeant-major if he resisted. Worked upon in this manner, Filoff had apparently lost his head, and in spite of the orders of his Government, paid Kaulbars a visit, to be sure without his officers, who probably would not have obeyed him if he had invited them to accompany him. Thus the General had indeed the satisfaction of being able to converse with Filoff; but the Government, to whom such interviews appeared highly dangerous, sent telegraphic orders for the immediate arrest of Filoff. This command was complied with, and Lieutenant-Colonel Lubomski started for Rustchuk to take over the command of the brigade in Filoff's place. Simultaneously Lieutenant-Colonel Shivaroff, Brigade Commandant at Shumla, who had been in Sofia and while there had paid two visits to the Russian Consulate, was recalled on his return journey to Shumla, and when, notwithstanding, he attempted to continue his journey, was arrested. His post was for the moment not filled up, but Captain Veltscheff was appointed Chief-of-the-Staff to the Shumla

Brigade and thus, to all intents and purposes, Commandant, and thus the two brigades, which the Russians had chosen as their principal subjects for intrigue and agitation, found themselves in safe hands. The Government would have preferred to act with greater mildness and indulgence towards the officers, but, in view of the intrigues of M. Kaulbars and his agents, recourse to the sharpest methods was indispensably necessary, in order to deprive other officers of any desire to let themselves be inveigled into "conversations" with M. Kaulbars.

As he had intended, Kaulbars reached Shumla on the 10th October, the day of the elections. This town lies at a distance of over seven kilometres from the railway-station, a fact that is susceptible of the very simple explanation, that the railway has been built under the management of Von Hirsch. On the long road to the town Kaulbars was, for the first time, met by a really imposing crowd, numbering itself by thousands, which however did not belong to the "true people," for they vociferated cheers for the Constitution and Independence of Bulgaria, and moreover presented the General with the "Three Counterpoints." Immediately before the entrance into the town there *did* appear the "true people," led by a former Zankoffist Minister, Ikonomoff, who spoke some words, full of most proper sentiment, to the General. It was only a pity that their numbers exactly corresponded to that of the "Twelve Points," neither a man more nor less. Before the hotel, where Kaulbars put up, matters proceeded the reverse of calmly, for the crowd that had assembled there, uttered unceasing cheers for the Independence of Bulgaria, a species of music in the highest degree discordant to M. Kaulbars. Here in this

hotel Kaulbars for the first time met his "forerunner," Major Petroff, in person, and pity it must be said, that he so far misinterpreted the mission of the latter, as to reproach him with forestalling him, inciting the people against him, and preventing them from receiving him in the way they would have done, had they been allowed to follow their own inclinations. Petroff indignantly repelled these accusations, but regretted for the rest that he could not enter into a political discussion with the General, since he, as an officer, could not mix himself with politics, but had only to execute the orders of his Government. Kaulbars requested Petroff at least to cause the noisy crowd to retire from his hotel, a request with which Petroff was unable to comply, for the simple reason that he held no command in Shumla. He advised Kaulbars to apply to the Prefect, which I believe, was afterwards done. The situation in Shumla was then certainly not such as Kaulbars had probably expected, and there certainly was no talk of "the Shumla garrison marching on Tirnova," or being about to march.

Also at Varna the General experienced no pleasure. After the "Points" and "Counterpoints" had been exchanged in the usual manner between Kaulbars and the people, the mob proceeded to Major Petroff, whose hotel was situated nearly opposite that of Kaulbars', and offered him an ovation. Apparently this demonstration nettled M. Kaulbars, for he at once appeared on his balcony, menacingly pointed with his finger at the jubilant crowd, and shouted at them the endearing term, "Durak," which may be translated by "ass" or "block-head." The word was not very polite, and moreover, considered objectively, not quite *à-propos*, but it denoted

the frame of mind, in which General Kaulbars found himself after travelling through Bulgaria from one end to the other, from Sofia to Varna. At Sofia it was Nihilists and gipseys, with whom the General had to do; at Varna "duraks,"—and between the two towns how fearfully thin had been the sprinkling of the "true people!"

What a difference between the 11th kilomètre before Sofia, where an Austrian Tzech and a Russian woman from Finland had welcomed the General in the name of the Bulgarian nation,—and the hateful demonstrations of evil mobs at Sofia, Shumla, Varna!

*Es wär zu schön gewesen,**

Es hat nicht sollen sein!

* It would have been *too* beautiful—
But it was not to be.

CHAPTER XX.

THE ELECTIONS.

The security of Sofia—Major Popoff—Arrival of the peasants—Speech by Neklyudoff—"The elections are null and void"—The assault of the Sheepskins on the polling booths is repulsed—"To the Russian Consulate"—M. Neklyudoff's ménagerie—Neklyudoff finds himself at variance with his colleagues regarding his humanitarian task—Sofia *s'amuse*—A first collision—The windows of the English Consulate are broken—A second collision—Russian kavasses open fire on the crowd—The German and English Consulates are at the same time bombarded—M. Neklyudoff becomes alarmed at the state of affairs and dismisses the peasants—The latter are arrested—Neklyudoff's diplomatic campaign—The result of the elections in Sofia and the provinces—The Dubnitza murders.

Notwithstanding all M. Kaulbars' declarations to the effect, that the Russian Government would not recognise the validity of the elections, they had been settled by the Bulgarian Government to take place on the 10th October, and, according to the reports that came in from the country, there was every hope that they would go off in perfect tranquillity. The only anxiety was Sofia, where Russian agents had been openly agitating, especially in the outlying villages included in the electoral district. A crowd of suspicious looking foreigners had also arrived in Sofia, to all of whom the Russian Consulate extended its hospitality, while carefully hiding them from profane eyes. The "Russian Emperor Hotel," as the Russian Agency was derisively termed, entertained at different times as many as forty of such guests, whose external appearance was certainly little calculated to

cause confidence, more especially from the fact that they were all armed to the teeth. During the whole of the three days immediately preceding the elections, the Government remained in hourly dread that M. Neklyudoff's boarders might attempt a night attack. People in fact went so far as to speak of nothing less than a rising, and the possible abduction of the Regents Stambuloff and Mutkuroff. Had the attempt been made, it would certainly have failed, for, rendered prudent by experience, Major Popoff watched with conscientious pains over the security of the city. There are Bulgarian officers who are great talkers, and pose before the public as great politicians: Popoff never speaks, but wherever, by day or night, you might chance to move in Sofia, everywhere, you encountered a silent horseman on a white steed, followed by a few cavalrymen, who once seen, people went to bed in peace, for they knew that *Popoff was on the watch*. And Bulgaria's enemies were also aware of this, and probably to this fact it is alone to be ascribed that before the elections no violent attempt was made to overthrow the Regency in Sofia.

The 10th October, the day of the elections, was wonderfully fine, and up to eleven o'clock everything proceeded with perfect quiet. The electors had chosen their election-committee without any of the rowdy scenes usual to Bulgaria, and Sofia had in no respect changed its accustomed appearance. All comers from the old town, which had been chosen as the site for the polling booths, agreed in describing the elections as proceeding in the most prosaic manner, and as in fact hardly repaying the trouble of a visit. People already began to believe that this state of things would continue, and that the

peasants, whom the Russians had brought in on hire from the environs of Sofia, either had received counter-orders, or had refused obedience.

These hopes were, unhappily, premature, for shortly after eleven the peasants began to come in and assemble at the polling-booth, without however making any shew of entering it. They seemed rather to arrange themselves in military fashion, and on the procession being formed, the word was given—"to the Russian Consulate." The procession at once moved off, and, followed by a crowd of sight-seers, marched through the city, escorted by gendarmes on horse and foot, Popoff himself bringing up the rear, being anxious to discover what mischief the "sheepskins*" were bent on; for they all wore beautiful, new, white Sunday-go-to-meeting sheepskins, which they certainly would not have put on, had they known what was before them that day. Their march through the city seemed to afford them great fun, for they laughed as if uncommonly pleased with themselves, and were evidently delighted at the unwonted amount of attention they excited. Arrived in front of the Russian Consulate, they concentrated immediately, with a perspicacity worthy of remark, not at some point in front of the chief façade, but at a corner, where was situated the balcony on which in his time Bogdanoff had received the adoration of the mob. A few words were exchanged between some of the "sheepskins" and the Russian kavass, when a few chosen ones were admitted. While this was going on, a *Kmet* (village magistrate) spoke a few words to the mob, concluding his speech with "long live the Emperor of Russia!" The peasants took up the cry, M. Neklyudoff, who forthwith appeared on the balcony, being received

* So called from their garment.

with loud cheers. As soon as he had succeeded, by expressive waves of the hand, in obtaining silence, he began to address the mob in a loud voice. His speech was short, merely describing the love the Tzar bore towards the Bulgarian people, and laying stress on the impossibility of holding the elections at the present moment. "Whatever may be the result of the elections, Russia does not recognise their validity, and they are null and void." Neklyudoff concluded with a cheer for the Tzar and for the Bulgarian Nation, his address being received with loud applause by the 150 (about their number) "sheepskins."

Now had the peasants been logical persons, they would, as their attitude appeared to denote complete submission to Russia, have simply gone home and kept aloof from the elections. It would however have accorded but indifferently with the aim of their task-master if they had returned to their villages without disturbance, and hence their leaders had received quite other instructions. Hardly had Neklyudoff concluded, and hardly had the last cheers died away, when the leaders in loud tones commanded their herd to move on. "Forward" was the word, and at once the peasants, forming themselves into column of route, marched towards the old town. From the direction, taken by the peasants, it was clear that they intended to pay the polling place a visit, and I with a few friends drove thither rapidly through bye-streets, so as to forestall them. We were successful and found the Gourko Square, on which the polling-station, an old school surrounded by a garden and high wall, stood, although fairly filled with men, still however perfectly quiet. The electors were

coming and going; a few persons, actuated by curiosity, peered now and again into the garden through the half-open door; harmless vendors offered grapes and fruit for sale; a few gendarmes were pacing to and fro with countenances, on which boredom was depicted.

Suddenly loud shouts were heard and a rush ensued, the meaning of which at first was not quite clear. Everything that now happened, followed in such rapid succession, that one had hardly time to take in each separate episode. From out the throng was seen to emerge the head of the advancing column of peasants, who, just before reaching the polling-station, broke into a run, and with a loud hurrah precipitated themselves into the doorway. About half seemed already to have got into the garden, when a brief block occurred, and those still outside were prevented entering. These at once opened a bombardment on the garden with huge stones, which they had, with much foresight, brought with them, while savage shouts resounded from within. In a trice the whole scene was changed; the wing of the door that was shut, yielding to a pressure from within, burst open with a loud bang, bringing to view a huge heap of "sheepskins," who shouting and kicking were rolling over one another. Urged forward from without, thrown back from within, the two sections of peasants had collided and were mutually trampling each other down. Behind this swarm appeared, much as the background of a picture, persons, who with long staves, seemed to be zealously and conscientiously drubbing the "sheepskins." Even for a "sheepskin" such a situation, became in a little time painful, nay insupportable, and the heap accordingly began to disentangle itself and to

make off with rapid strides, followed for a short distance by the persons with the long staves, who seemed only anxious to deal a last parting stroke. Seldom in my life have I laughed so much as I did here, this flight of peasants, who nearly filled a narrow street, resembling to a T that of a frightened flock of sheep, only that in this case the sheep were of a somewhat antediluvian magnitude.

Only a few peasants remained behind, being unable to fly with the rest, having been severely punished about the region of the nose, and the streams of blood preventing them from seeing, and therefore also from fleeing. These victims of a barbarous Government had been however well instructed, for as soon as they had cleared their eyes of blood with their clumsy fists, they announced their intention of proceeding to the Russian Consulate. For the rest, this cry, "To the Russian Consulate," had already been raised by the flying "sheepskins," and thus it was but natural that the most interesting amongst them, "the wounded," should bend their steps thither, where to the weak was assured support, and to the persecuted a sure shelter.

Not in well-ordered procession, as they had come, but in small groups, the peasants repaired to the Consulate, the wounded probably parading their wounds. The latter proudly had good reason to be content, and I fancy that a street arab exactly expressed their innermost thoughts, when, noticing the bloody nose of one, with a feeling of envy that he could not restrain, he shouted, "What rubles he'll get!" In the Russian Consulate, all haste was made at once to admit the unhappy people into a courtyard, shut off from the street by a high and

strong iron grating, while in one of the ground floor rooms, an ambulance was at once erected, where the wounded were tended with loving care. Probably, never till now had the scratches of a Bulgarian peasant been so assiduously attended to. It was, of course, quite an accident that the operations, directed by a surgeon and a hospital nurse, took place close to the windows, so that everything could be perfectly seen from without. The wounds were first of all washed clear of blood and were then carefully bound up with linen bandages. The blood, wiped off with sponges, was squeezed into a basin, and then this "basin of blood" was carried through the courtyard, so that all the peasants might see it. This was probably done with a view to calming their excited minds, for it is a fact that the sight of blood acts as a sedative on the nerves. In the end, 38 men had been bandaged, a result which could only have been attained by pressing into the service the most trifling bruises, for the number of bleeding persons that had entered the Consulate was at the highest, the very highest, ten or twelve. The wounds of the others appear not to have broken out until they were in the Consulate. In the courtyard, the people were divided into groups, and Colonel Sakharoff walked about among them, offering words of consolation and kindness. Every now and then a few cheers were heard for the Tzar; otherwise, all was quiet. There was certainly nothing that could lead to the supposition that there was any intention without of injuring the sheepskins. Whether it was, however, that the peasants dreaded an attack on their own precious persons, or on the Russian Consulate, or whether they desired to arm themselves for a sortie, as a *retour offensif*,

—for whatever reason it was, they made for a stack of firewood that had been built up in the yard, and commenced to transform it into bludgeons of awful size. As this kind of work, without the proper tools, was one of great difficulty, and moreover occasioned a considerable loss of time, the Consular servants produced saws, and soon the courtyard had the appearance of a carpenter's workshop. These not unsuspicious preparations could be observed with the greatest precision; while one spot moreover offered a point of vantage from which the number of sheepskins could be exactly counted, the various results arrived at always making them between 150 and 160 head.

While the peasants were thus occupying themselves in the Consulate, a large number of people had assembled in its vicinity, who watched the sheepskins within the court-yard with looks betokening but scant benevolence, though without apparently intending any act of overt hostility. The peasants behind the grating gave quite the impression of a number of wild beasts, confined in a ménagerie, whom a curious crowd were watching at the bars of the cage. In ménageries and zoological gardens you may observe children and stupid lads, who seem to have an irresistible impulse to irritate the savage beasts, less for the purpose of really annoying them, than in order to see what they will do, if tickled with a straw or umbrella. It was almost exactly the same here, with the difference however, that the savage beasts (I refer to the "sheepskins") attempted at the same time to irritate the worthy public. In fine, the entertainment was excellent, and the splendid weather added its charm to the success of the popular holiday.

In the mean time M. Neklyudoff had left the Consulate and had gone the round of his colleagues to inform them that his Consulate was filled with the unhappy victims of a despotic Government, inviting them to satisfy themselves by a personal visit of the condition of the wounded. At the same time he caused M. Nacevics to be informed that he had no sort of desire for any police protection for his Consulate, as he was quite able to repulse all attacks without foreign aid. The various Diplomatic Agents on this proceeded to hold a consultation at Sir Frederick Lascelles', the English Consulate, in view of which was the court-yard of the Russian Consulate, in which everything that happened could be minutely observed. The decision of the diplomatists was not in accordance with M. Neklyudoff's desires, and indeed could not have so been, unless they had chosen to be guilty of the most flagrant dishonesty. They all knew right well that the affray at the polling-station was entirely the work of the "sheepskins," and that they had more than merited the thrashing they had received. They very probably said to one another, as far as diplomatic language would permit, that the "sheepskins" were nothing but blind tools in the hands of the Russian Agency, which stuck at neither demagogic agitation nor revolutionary intrigues. Finally I had grounds for conjecturing that the entire Diplomatic Body was not exactly pleasantly impressed by the intrigues of M. Kaulbars, and was by no means favourably disposed towards the Russian Agency. At any rate Neklyudoff met with a refusal, the Consuls coming to the decision, that there was no sort of reason, why they should go and inspect the wounds of Bulgarians, who had been thrashed while in

the act of committing an illegal deed. The Consuls gave it as their opinion, that this was a matter, which did not in the least concern them, and with which they consequently ought not to interfere. Herr von Burian, the Austrian Consul, was requested by his colleagues to inform M. Neklyudoff of this decision, and he accordingly repaired at once to the Russian Consulate, where M. Neklyudoff received his intelligence with regret. There was however no help for it, and all that he could get out of Herr von Burian was, that he, "quite privately however and in no official capacity," had looked at a few of the peasants who had been assaulted. On this Neklyudoff pointed out a man who was sitting on a cask, whose "ribs had been broken." This injury, it appears to me, merits the most serious attention of every medical man, for hitherto all experience has shewn, that people, who have had their ribs broken, prefer generally to lie down, and not to sit on a cask. The acknowledged great hardihood and capability for endurance of Bulgarian constitutions seems however to produce quite another effect, and to overturn maxims, which hitherto have stood unquestioned in medical science.

While this was going on, everything had become perfectly quiet at the polling-station, and the polling was going on with almost irksome tranquillity. In the old town nothing seemed doing, while in the new town reigned a contented and cheerful temper. The band was playing in the palace-garden, while the people were promenading on the carefully kept walks, and only now and then was an excursion made to the Russian Consulate to look at the ménagerie there and to return again to the garden perfectly contented. While the

band entertained the ear, the eye was delighted by the picturesque scene at the Russian Consulate, where, a wagon load of bread having arrived, the feeding of the "sheepskins" took place, who appeared to make themselves quite at home. Excellent vodka moistened the meal of bread, and one would now have supposed that the "sheepskins" would lie down quietly to digest their food and would have taken any teasing with that kind equanimity, which amongst "good fellows" is the usual result of a sumptuous feed.

This was however not so in this case, but the teasing and baiting continued, principally taking place in front of a wing of the Consulate, which was situated on a moderately broad street opposite the English and German Consulates. The peasants mockingly invited the townspeople into the Consulate, while the townspeople jeered at the peasants for the thrashing they had received in the morning. One word led to another, and from words they finally came to deeds. Which side really commenced, it is impossible to determine with any degree of certainty. It is quite possible that hostilities broke out simultaneously on either side. Be that as it may, large logs and stones began to fly from out the Russian Consulate, which were answered on the other side by a bombardment of stones. Harmless persons, who from curiosity had come to inspect the "ménagerie," ran in terror in all directions; a few panes of glass in the English Consulate were shattered by stones from the Russian side; the police appeared; and in a trice the street was empty. The "sheepskins" thus had not only held their position, but had also put the foe to flight; while the latter had managed to carry off a few trophies in the shape of huge bludgeons, which had been used as missiles.

On neither side was this occurrence taken *au tragique*; the sheepskins congratulated themselves at the delightful *intermezzo*, which had interrupted the quiet that was beginning to pall; while on the other hand the spectators quickly returned, "M. Neklyudoff's ménagerie" having become all the more interesting after the uproar of the "wild beasts." The band in the palace-garden played merrily on and—"Freude herrschte in Trojas Hallen."* One of the Russian missiles certainly struck Lady Lascelles' maid slightly on the arm, but amongst friends one takes this sort of thing in good part.

Now however was to come the second encounter, of which we shall have to speak in somewhat more serious tones. The "sheepskins" and spectators being once more quieted, (M. Neklyudoff had himself forbidden the police to interfere) the baiting went on apace. Anticipating that his dear guests would remain the night, Neklyudoff had sent for a wagon load of hay, on which the peasants were to bivouac. Some evil minded jokers amongst the spectators however spread the report, that the hay was also for the feeding of the peasants, and its distribution was accompanied with loud cries of "Muh! Muh!" Being mistaken for their own beloved domestic brutes rendered the peasants very indignant, and a specially choleric sheepskin hurled his bludgeon over the iron grating. This was a signal for a fresh battle, and bludgeons of all shapes and sizes, great, small and medium stones hurtled through the air, the English and German Consulates, more especially the latter, with the Germans who were standing in front of it, forming the butt. Affairs were already beginning to

* Joy reigned in the halls of Troy.

take much the same course, as on the first time, that is to say, the mob outside were commencing to bolt, when one of the Russian Consular servants sprang forward, revolver in hand, fired two shots to commence with in the air, and then four at the mob, all of which struck the German Consulate, some breast high, some as high as a man's head. Simultaneously a fire proceeded from other parts of the Russian Consulate, two shots from one spot and five from another, one of which wounded the horse of a Bulgarian officer, while others again struck the German and English Consulate. Two bullets whistled by the head of the German Consul-General, Herr von Thielmann, and it was only by a lucky chance, that he was not shot.

How the street was emptied at a blow, as if by magic! Everyone rushed to its issues, or sought refuge in the courtyards of the German and English Consulates, the police also appearing forthwith, with some military who had been summoned, and who proceeded to close the streets leading to the Russian Consulate.

The impression which this outrage on the part of the Russians produced on the whole population, foreign as well as native, is difficult of description. Eight days long had the Russians been unceasing in their endeavours to provoke disturbances, and when at last, in spite of every incitement, they had failed, they did not hesitate to allow the populace to be fired on, nor did they even respect the Foreign Consulates, against which their *employés* dared to open a bombardment. The brutality of the Russian conduct is only excelled by its stupidity, for how might matters have turned out, had the Russian bullets, as was quite possible, struck the German Consul General?

To presume to do such a thing, the Russians must have already felt that they were more than absolute masters in this country; annoyance at the miscarriage of their plans must have deprived them of all reflection; for otherwise they would never have ventured to do as they did. For the Bulgarians, however, the unmasking of the Tartar nature was not a disadvantage, for with their coarse, open provocation in Sofia, with the bombardment of the Foreign Consulates, the Russians had succeeded in placing themselves completely in the wrong in the eyes of the public opinion of Europe, a result which naturally could not but react in favour of the Bulgarians and their national aspirations.

M. Neklyudoff himself seemed to feel, that things had gone too far, and accordingly he made arrangements for dismissing the peasants from the Consulate, although the earlier preparations had appeared to manifest an intention to retain them in the Consulate till night-fall, and then let them loose on the city. The doors of the Consulate accordingly opened, and the peasants were let out in small groups, but were forthwith made prisoners by two companies of the Alexander Regiment, which, under the orders of the Battalion-Commander, Captain Petkoff, were awaiting them in the street. Some of the peasants began to shew signs of resistance, but they were promptly set upon by the excited soldiery in so determined a manner, that they, as soon as they had all been made prisoners, followed the escort quietly like a lot of sheep—which indeed they were. That the police and the military were perfectly justified in arresting these fellows is, in spite of Russian denials, incontestable. In the first place, they had been guilty of, according to Bulgarian

laws, a punishable crime, in attempting forcibly to disturb an election; then they had been the exciting cause of the riotous scenes in front of the Russian Consulate; and finally it was necessary in their own interests to arrest them, as otherwise they would have been severely handled by the mob which had been enraged by the firing. The peasants, whom, before being dismissed from the Consulate, M. Neklyudoff had caused to be deprived of the bludgeons they had prepared there, surrounded by an exultant mob, were conveyed outside the town to the barracks, where, their names having been taken down, they were dismissed by small detachments. They had grown very piano, while their story was that their *kmets* had taken them to the Russian Consulate under the pretext that every one not following would have to pay a fine of three rubles. They were furious with their *kmets*, and one cannot certainly blame them for it, as no one has ever yet reckoned it among the amenities of human life, twice in one day to be thrashed, and for three hours behind a grating to be gazed at and baited like a wild beast. They say that the next day, the *kmets* had a rough time of it at the hands of their "sheepskins"; but the report that the *kmets* were again coming to Sofia to avenge themselves in their turn on M. Neklyudoff, has not been fulfilled. It perhaps was just as well; for what would matters have come to had the vengeance of the poor "sheepskins" been repeated in every detail through each successive grade up to the highest quarters? One cannot grasp the thought.

Neklyudoff, the revolutionary, having brought upon himself a complete defeat, Neklyudoff, the diplomat, considered it requisite also in his capacity to make a fiasco.

Immediately on the departure of the peasants from the Consulate, he addressed a note to Sir F. Lascelles, as the *doyen* of the Diplomatic Corps, in which he informed him that a Montenegrin, who happened to be in the Consulate-General, had fired "*two shots in the air*;" that he, Neklyudoff, regretted this incident; and had caused the guilty person to be placed in confinement in the Consulate. "Two shots fired in the air"—this was however rather too strong, and after Sir Frederick Lascelles had communicated the note to his colleagues, M. Neklyudoff received the two following replies: in the first place, a letter from Herr von Thielmann, stating that several shots had been fired against the German Consulate, and that immediately afterwards he had assured himself of the marks of the bullets on the wall of the Consulate by a personal examination. Sir F. Lascelles wrote to Neklyudoff that he could only explain his (Neklyudoff's) statement regarding the two shots fired into the air, by the supposition that M. Neklyudoff had written his note immediately after the first two shots and before the others had been fired. M. Neklyudoff answered in an injured tone, that Sir F. Lascelles, as an eye-witness of the whole occurrence, must have known well enough that the shots had followed one another in such rapid succession, as to preclude the possibility of writing any note in the interval, and that, for the rest, he did not lay great value on arithmetical calculations. This exchange of notes was finally brought to an end by M. Neklyudoff, who in a concluding note expressed his regret that his first note had apparently given rise to a misunderstanding. To Herr von Thielmann M. Neklyudoff made his excuses in person.

The result of the election contest in Sofia was quite in accordance with expectations; all the Government candidates were brought in by enormous majorities, the votes for the Russian candidates being quite insignificant.

Similarly throughout the provinces the united national parties had scored a brilliant victory in spite of all the Russian agitations, powerfully supported as these had been. Only two districts, Vratsha and Byeloslatina, had in compliance with Russian orders refused to hold the elections, while in five others, Iskretz, Troyan, Drenova, Dubnitsa, and the East-Rumelian district of Haskioi, they had not taken place, either because the various parties could not come to an agreement in the matter, or because, as at Haskioi, the voting urn and papers had been stolen. In all 522 Deputies had been duly elected, of whom, while the views of 20 were unknown, some 30 belonged to the Opposition, or Russian Party, and 470 to the National Party; figures, which when taken in conjunction with the incidents of M. Kaulbars' tour, are well calculated to reduce to its proper value the Panslavic assertions regarding the sympathies of the Bulgarians for Russia.

The only serious disturbances, that had occurred during the elections, were at Dubnitsa, where there is, in consequence of the importation of the frontier Macedonian element, a very unruly population. These Macedonians were as had already been proved at Sofia much more accessible to the seducer's arts than the Bulgarians. The special inducements, that appear to have been held out to them, were the promise of complete exemption from all taxation the moment that the Russians

should occupy the country, and the prospect, dangled before their eyes, of support in exhilarating and merry raids into Macedonia. Whether there had also been any money distributed, I am unable to state, though indeed it is very probable. Be that as it may, on the day of the elections armed bands suddenly appeared in the town, against whom the small force of police and the couple of soldiers, who were there, were powerless. The latter had been, it is said, surprised and disarmed, and the town found itself completely at the mercy of the bands, who immediately proceeded to seize in their houses the more notorious of the Representatives of the National Party, and cruelly to murder them. The Sub-Prefect Dimitrieff, the two Deputies Grantcharoff and Zograff, as well as the schoolmaster Papuktchieff, became victims of the "Friends of Russia."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SITUATION AFTER THE ELECTIONS.

The independence of Bulgaria—The Great Powers—Tisza and Churchill—The Balkan Federation—A dark future—No fresh *German* Prince for the throne of Bulgaria.

The attitude of the Government had shewn to demonstration, that it desired an *independent Bulgaria*, and had no intention of submitting to the immoderate demands of Russia. From the rejection of the "Three Points" up to M. Nacevics' note of the 14th October, in which he haughtily declared, that the Bulgarian Government could accept a "severe censure" only from the National Assembly and not from M. Kaulbars*—everywhere was apparent a strong desire to preserve the independence of the country, a desire which, though tempered with moderation and calmness, was none the less most decided in its expression. The elections of the 10th October had proved that the population at large were by an overwhelming majority in accord with the Government, and the general interest now centres itself in the Grand National Assembly, which on the 27th October met at Tirnova.

Of the last importance in the decisions, that will have to be taken, will be the general political situation in Europe, which, thanks in a great measure to M. Kaulbars, has in the last few weeks undergone a most remarkable transformation.

* M. Kaulbars, because he had been displeased at a note from M. Nacevics, had through Neklyudoff addressed a note to the Bulgarian Government, strongly censuring the latter.

The German Government, which to begin with had gone hand in hand with Russia on every occasion, and had in every case given out as a matter of course its complete agreement with her, has assumed an expectant attitude, and no longer takes up as formerly a prominent position. Italy, unmoved by these events, has continued her quiet, benevolent policy; and France also has acted so far consistently, that the only object she has apparently had in view has been to keep on the best terms she could with Russia.

Official utterances, in a sense favourable to Bulgarian Independence, proceed from two States, both of which seem somewhat tardily to have recognized the fact, that in Bulgaria something more was in question than the fate of a small Balkan State. On the 30th September, in answer to an interpellation in the Chamber on the subject of Bulgarian affairs, Tisza spoke; and on the 2nd October at Dartford Lord Randolph Churchill delivered a speech, which bore in every respect the character of an announcement of a programme. Both speeches were as regards the development of affairs in Bulgaria of the greatest of importance, and will possibly in the future prove even more so.

Tisza declared to the Deputies, that he at once repelled the assumption, that the deposition of the Prince had been foreseen by the Foreign Office, or that it had had any sort of information beforehand of the outrage that was to be perpetrated, or that under any condition it would have approved of the same. This and the subsequent events were just as little known to the Foreign Office as the fact, that the Prince of Bulgaria, as it appeared from a telegram, looked on his crown as

received direct from the Emperor of Russia, and had made his further stay in Bulgaria dependent on his consent. There existed no sort of agreement between the Austro-Hungarian Government and Russia regarding the influence that each might exercise either in the Western or Eastern portions of the Balkan Peninsula, and accordingly no conditions could have been entered into.

In the further course of his speech, Tisza continued in the following words:—"Whenever since 1868 I first of all had occasion to express myself on the subject of the Eastern question, I have always stated as my own personal view regarding the coming events, that should changes take place there, our interests would demand that, the various nationalities there living, should in accordance with their individualities form themselves into Independent States. In agreement with our Foreign Office, I am of opinion that this is still to-day the policy that accords best with the interests of the Monarchy, and that the Monarchy, while repudiating all desires of aggrandizement or conquest, should direct all her efforts and influence, to prevent the establishment of any Protectorate not provided for by treaty, or of the permanent ascendancy of any single Foreign Power in that country. With regard to our treaty relations with Foreign Powers, no change has taken place, and they accordingly continue unaltered in the position defined in the Delegations by the Common Minister for Foreign Affairs. With Germany we remain to-day on the same basis as heretofore; and for this very reason it cannot be doubted, that, with regard to the mutual condition of existence, we shall be able to keep these united without

endangering the general peace. Although in isolated cases, amongst which the events of last year in East-Rumelia have been fraught with the most serious consequences, it has been violated, yet we on our side look on the Berlin Treaty of Peace as still in force, and therefore as such to be upheld. We are moreover unaware that any other Power holds opposite views. The Government still maintains its repeatedly expressed opinion that, according to existing treaties regarding the Balkan Peninsula, in the event of Turkey's not claiming the rights which belong to her, no one else is justified in attempting an armed interference, or in establishing a Protectorate, and that in general no change can take place in the individual rights or balance of power among the Balkan States, except with the consent of the signatory Powers. Such are the general outlines of the aims we have in view, the success of which we claim, and hope to achieve in accord with the Powers without interrupting the general peace. We shall not jeopardise the attainment of this end by the utterance of premature declarations; but, while adhering to those lines of calmness and moderation that are doubly requisite in critical times, we shall not cease earnestly and resolutely to strive for its attainment."

Lord Randolph Churchill, on whose political weight in the Tory Cabinet it would be mere waste of words to dwell, introduced his speech with the remark, that the political situation in Bulgaria gave cause for more serious consideration than anything else. A brutal, cowardly conspiracy had succeeded, ere the young state had had time to consolidate itself, in paralysing the governing authority of the Prince, and in depriving Bulgaria of an

honoured and trusted leader. At the present moment the freedom and independence of Bulgaria, as well as that of the Kingdoms of Servia and Rumania, would appear to be seriously compromised. This serious question was undoubtedly attracting much public attention in England. The assertion, that England had no close or material interest in the issues involved, appeared to him far too loose and general. The sympathy of England with liberty and with the freedom and independence of communities and nationalities was of ancient origin, and had become the traditional direction of her foreign policy. The speech of Tisza, the Prime Minister, in the Hungarian Parliament shewed that the freedom and independence of the Danubian Principalities and of the Balkan nationalities were a primary and vital object in the policy of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. That being so, it might well be that England could honourably and safely afford to view with much satisfaction that Power, whose interests are most directly and vitally concerned, assuming the foremost part in this great international work. Whatever modification this great fact might enable England to make in her foreign policy, whatever diminution of isolated risk and sole responsibility this might enable her to effect, of one thing people might feel confident—that there would be no sudden or violent departure by the present Government from those main principles of foreign policy. There were European Powers, who earnestly and honestly desired to avoid war, while there were others, who from time to time betray a regrettable tendency towards contentions and even aggressive action. It was the duty of any British Government to exhaust itself in efforts to maintain the

best and most friendly relations with all Foreign States, and to lose no opportunity of offering friendly and conciliatory counsels, for the purpose of mitigating national rivalries and of peacefully solving international difficulties. But should circumstances arise, which from their grave and dangerous nature, forced the Government of the Queen to make a choice, it could not be doubted that the sympathy, and, if necessary, the support, of England would be given to those Powers who seek the peace of Europe and the liberty of peoples, and in whose favour England's timely adhesion would probably, and without the use of force, decide the issue.

But if the diplomatists of the two countries, had delivered speeches, which, if translated from diplomatic into ordinary language, were very strong, yet the press went still further, especially after the incidents attaching to the elections of the 10th October became known. I cannot forego here quoting the utterances of two well-known papers, both of which exercise a great influence on public opinion in their respective countries, both also being much in the confidence of their Governments. Thus the conservative "Standard" writes:—

"The conduct of the Russian Agent has been, from first to last, a monstrous violation of all International Law and all public decency. Is he acting under the instructions of the Tzar? If he is not, the Emperor should not lose a day in recalling the reckless and audacious Envoy who is travestying the commands of his sovereign, insulting the feelings and trampling under his heel the rights of the Bulgarian people, and preparing either for Russia a flagrant humiliation, or for Europe a gigantic conflict. But if, as is infinitely more probable,

the General be really inspired by orders from St. Petersburg, and is only carrying into effect the intentions of his Imperial Master, then all we can say is that we are witnessing something very much worse than the worst features of the policy of the Emperor Nicholas, which led to the Crimean War. We search in vain through past annals for such an example of conduct as is attributed to General Kaulbars by a host of unimpeachable witnesses of various nationalities. Louis XIV., whip in hand, could not have given himself such airs of impudent masterdom, as this product of the Russian barrack, who at one and the same time assumes the functions, and rejects the manners of a diplomatist, not to say of a gentleman. * * There is no title known to politics or diplomacy that would adequately describe the character and conduct of this truly extraordinary Envoy—this “peripatetic liar,” as the *Independent Bulgarian* roughly calls him.”

Infinitely more cutting is the language of the “Pesther Lloyd,” a journal intimately connected with Tisza, regarding Kaulbars and his exploits. In an article, dated the 11th October, we read—

“One would be almost justified in asking the question, whether we should not be guilty of a gross injustice to the Frankfort mob, which perpetrated the ghastly murders of General Auerswald and Prince Lichnovsky, or that band of assassins, who carried the decapitated head of Princess Lamballe through the streets of Paris on a pike and held it before the window of the captive king, were we to place them on the same level with the Diplomatic Agent in Bulgaria of His Majesty Alexander III., the Emperor of all the Russias? The deeds of those monsters were at least in accordance with

the principles they professed, while the mode of their execution was consistent. They were the most horrible brutalities, or to speak more correctly, beastialities, that they perpetrated: but then, they had no pretensions to being anything else but beasts in the shape of men, and, while they deliberately ran the risk, they were well aware that, if beaten, they would be treated as such by the opposite side. So far then at least the game was even between the two sides; so far at least the struggle was honourable. But here was exhibited to the world the spectacle of persons, on whom before all others one would have supposed it to be incumbent to represent and to protect the principle of law and international morality; instigating the commission of the foulest and lowest crimes, instigating them too in so open and shameless a manner, that from the jurist's point of view, it is hardly possible to discern the smallest distinction between them and the street-murderers proper—while, viewed from the stand-points of morality and ethics, they fall far below the level of the miserable tools that they suborned. In every respect! They claimed for themselves the protection of international law, but the corresponding obligations, which this same international law laid on them, and which even, if not enjoined by international law, were self-evident, they scouted in the most shameless manner. To the atrocity of the act must be added the abjectness of the cowardice, with which they, safe in their secure position, hurled a firebrand into the midst of a young State, which apparently gave every promise of through its own strength becoming free and prosperous, had not another State, actuated by the most miserable passions, by greed of land, by revenge and childish vanity, set to

work with the express object of, hindering by every means at its disposal the development of the small, unfortunate, weak country; pausing before no crime that seemed to favour the end in view. It is a pitiful spectacle, that which has now for some weeks together been enacted before the eyes of Europe. A nation which has but a few years emerged from a state of abject servitude, displays during a long, almost endless succession of the most various and trying situations, a calmness, a sense of legality, a circumspection, a steadfastness—in short an union of the most opposite qualities, such as in general can denote only a nation that has attained to the highest point of political culture; and such as, under less difficult conditions, those various European nations that so self-satisfiedly arrogate to themselves the title of cultivated peoples, would by no means always be able to display. A neighbouring State, much more powerful—which desires as a reward for having, while in the pursuit of other and very transparent ends, *en passant*, as it were, delivered the Bulgarian nation from the weight of a former yoke, to humble them under its own infinitely more cruel and debasing yoke—exhausts for this purpose every means, capable of being turned anyhow or nohow to the realisation of this end. Intimidation, bribery, menaces, flattery, obstruction of the executive and administration of justice, systematically planned undermining of the existing authorities, instigation of conspiracies, incitement to perjury—nothing is left untried by Russia to induce the Bulgarians to renounce their proper national rights and to consent to an unwilling surrender to Russia. But this small and heroic nation, while it yields before its brutal oppressor, to the very last,

the extremest limits of concession, yet resists the preposterous demands that urge it to self-annihilation. The more its rights are attacked and invaded, the more firmly and obstinately does it cling to them; while at the same time, with a rare self-control, for which no words can adequately express our admiration, it has shewn itself capable of adhering strictly to the bonds of legality, never allowing even the most irritating insults, affronts or pretensions, the grossest violations of the law, the most offensive rejections of offers that touched the extremest limits of concession, to hurry it into the commission of any sort of indiscretion. Indeed this has been so far the case, that the measure of gratitude to which Russia considers she has a claim for the liberation of the Bulgarians from the Turkish yoke, is still as heretofore fully acknowledged, and the nation declares itself unhesitatingly ready to allow it every consideration. It would not be easy to find many examples in the world's history of a nation that has been similarly proved in the fire of danger, adversity and trial. It seems however as if all would be in vain, and that the world's history is once again to be enriched with an example of how, in view of the general indifference and moral lethargy, crime is allowed to celebrate its repulsive triumphs. Now that Imperial Russian policy has seen that all its labours are in vain, that its villainy, inexhaustible in its means and immeasurable in its depth as it is, has yet failed to touch the political and national, the intellectual and moral health of the tiny nation, this same Imperial Russian policy has recourse to murder! It pays and arms bands of assassins, and as in the Bulgarian nation, even amongst the scum, sufficient men are not forth-

coming willing to do the Russian work, it hires them from neighbouring countries, sunk in the lowest depths of barbarism; lets loose its bravos—and to-day are lying corpses, weltering in their blood, the Dubnitza Prefect of Police, and two National candidates, slain at the immediate instigation, nay, one might say, by the very hand of the Diplomatic Agent of His Majesty, the Autocrat of all the Russias, Alexander III. In view of these matters the earnest question arises inexorably—is there still a Europe, a Europe in the political sense of the word? Does this word still imply necessarily a moral notion? Does this Europe still follow out any moral aim? Who will say that Europe has been taken by surprise? What has now happened is only the last, the necessary link in a long, unbroken chain of acts and developments, each of which has followed its predecessor with logical necessity. The impudent courses of Soboleff and Kaulbars; the brutal insults systematically practised against Prince Alexander with a view to undermining his authority; the various breaches of the Constitution and *coups d'état* guided by Russia; the Burgas assassination plot, and Russia's open intervention in favour of the conspirators; the seditious outrages on Prince Alexander; the self-identification with it of Russian policy; the Tzar's telegram; and finally the proceedings of Bogdanoff, Neklyudoff and the younger Kaulbars, who, daily throwing off more and more all restraint, endeavoured at any price to bring about disturbances—all these execrable and disgusting abominations have merely reached their crowning culmination in the Dubnitza murders."

In conclusion I subjoin a leading article from the

“Kölnischer Zeitung;” a paper which, during the whole of the Bulgarian difficulties, had maintained towards Russia an attitude of extreme moderation, but which finally writes as follows regarding the action of her agents:—

“If the object of the Representatives of Russia in Bulgaria is to place Russian policy in the wrong; if they are anxious to remove half the shadow of the cloud that the *coups d'état* brought on the national character of the Bulgarians, and to arouse in every manly breast a warm sympathy with the struggle for freedom of the best sons of a small, immature nation, but just emerged from servitude, then have they, with most remarkable precision and consistency, chosen and applied the proper means out of their political pharmacy. If hitherto the conduct of the Tzar's Envoys under the supposition of a complete misapprehension of Bulgarian popular sentiment, may have been susceptible at least of explanation and of partial condonation, yet yesterday's events cannot escape the most damning and destructive verdict. We adhere as hitherto to the truth of the view, that Russia is fully justified in exercising a paramount influence in Bulgaria. But it appears to be the destiny of the instruments of Russian diplomacy to prejudice her interests in exact proportion as the rest of the Powers allow them a free hand. Russian generals have by years of continuous mismanagement seriously jeopardised, indeed nearly destroyed, the moral foundations on which since the Turkish War Russian influence has rested; they have erased from the hearts of many on both sides of the Balkans the feelings, deeply rooted as they were, of affection and reverend awe, with which the Bulgarians looked up to the Great Tzar.

Thus it was that Russia found herself confronted with the task of once more, by the exercise of patience and diplomatic skill, smoothing away difficulties, which the carelessness and arrogance of the petty Envoys had created for her—a task in which she could reckon on the good-will and, to a certain extent, the active support, of the greatest and most powerful Statesman of our age, Prince Bismarck. And yet, in spite of these exceptionally fortunate conditions, she has allowed awkward and unskilful hands again to irretrievably bungle the game. When Kaulbars started on his much talked-of tour, which is only intelligible as being an appeal to the Bulgarian people, the general supposition was that, with regard to the events that were planned to take place in Sofia, the General would, when the time came, point to his alibi. To day we know, that this was to credit the General with altogether too much of the intriguer's skill. For it was the Russian Consul, Neklyudoff, who publicly, in the face of the whole world, brought those peasants into Sofia, who by means of their bludgeons were to impede the people of Sofia in the exercise of their constitutional rights as citizens. We have no desire to waste words on the fortuitous fact of the German Consulate having been fired on on the occasion in question. We do not doubt that in this respect Russia can offer the most satisfactory explanations. This attack formed no part of yesterday's programme, and deranged the supernumeraries and managers of the tragi-comedy equally with its general plan. The Bulgarian people only gave another proof on this occasion of its good-nature and inoffensiveness; but if the Russian Agents continue to bring into Sofia herds of short-fisted peasants,

who blindly follow any and every bell-wether, bloodshed might yet be the result."

Such was the judgment of Austrian and English Statesmen, such the verdict of the public opinion of Europe on Russian policy in Bulgaria.

The more abandoned the conduct of M. Kaulbars in Bulgaria, the more he assumed the rôle of a Russian satrap, so much clearer did it become to Servians and Rumanians what fate awaited them, should Russia once rule in Sofia. There has on the part of both States been a *rapprochement* towards Bulgaria; the formal indorsement of diplomatic intercourse with Serbia is imminent; and both thoroughly appreciate (alas very late!) the danger that menaces them. Is this recognition the commencement of the much-vaunted Balkan Federation? That is a question for the future.

A question for the future, *i.e.* a question which does not admit of a reply at the present time, is also that of how the destiny of Bulgaria will shape itself. The situation has of late altered for the better,* but it is still far from being hopeful, and hard times are yet in store for the Bulgarians. When they had once recovered from the state of surprise into which the crime of the 21st August had thrown them, they acted better than might really have been supposed. Their leading Statesmen, the Stambuloff's, Nacevics', Radoslavoff's, Stoiloff's, (Karaveloff can no longer be counted amongst the "leading" personages) gave evidence of shrewdness and resolution; the people stood by them loyally; while in the army affairs went better than could have been hoped. Only when we know against what foes, and against what

* The above was written before the close of October, 1886.—*Trans.*

resources the Bulgarians had to struggle, can we rightly appreciate what was here accomplished.

Possibly the Russians may attain their ends, possibly also they may not. This however at least is certain, that, in the former contingency, they will experience but little cause for congratulation in Bulgaria. Should a fresh prince come to the country, then either he will go with the Russians, and thus bring on himself the hatred of the nation, or he will pursue a rational policy, in which latter case the Russians will persecute him just as they did Prince Alexander. The situation will be equally unpleasant for the new Prince as for the Russians, who have really succeeded, through the stupidity of their agents, in rendering the position as unfavourable for themselves as possible. Had these gentlemen been paid for this precise object, they could not have acted otherwise! Perhaps the Emperor of Russia will recognise later what a bad service his agents rendered him, in calumniating to him the man, who was best able, not only to maintain peace and order in Bulgaria, but also to establish satisfactory relations between that country and Russia. Then however it will be too late!

In conclusion I would express one wish—if Prince Alexander is ever to have a successor in his inheritance, may it be no *German* Prince! Perhaps this book may live to see a supplementary edition, when I would prefer not to be compelled to record the mournful end of a compatriot.

FINIS.

RY

on

1

P

NOV 23 63

NOV 24 '87

MAR 1 1 1975

DEC 2 1 1975

Stanford University Library
Stanford, California

In order that others may use this book,
please return it as soon as possible, but
not later than the date due.

